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MA THESIS

THEME: John Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God and the description of the Miracle of Creation in "Paradise Lost" .

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ABSTRACT

OF DISSERTATION FOR MASTER'S DEGREE

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Abstract

Object of research – The object of dissertation is the literary conception, construction, and depiction of the Creator, and the Created. Moreover, it is aimed at describing the world created in seven days.

The Great poet of the English Bourgeois Revolution John Milton, was born in London on December 9, 1608. Many of Milton's poems were written at Horton. They form the first period in his creative activity. Milton's works are characterized with their duality. He chose his themes from the Bible, but in his epic poems the themes became revolutionary in spirit. John Milton wasn't just a poet; he was a wanted man. In the 1640s a Civil War was raging in England. During this time, John Milton wrote a lot of pamphlets. "Paradise Lost", one of the last works by John Milton, was written at the same time when the Bourgeois Revolution was coming to end unsuccessfully.

Milton has taken this theme from the Bible. The tragedy of Adam and Eve is the central theme of "Paradise Lost". There is probably no more familiar story in the world. "Paradise Lost" is an epic poem in blank verse, originally issued in 10 books in 1667 and was published in 12 books in the second edition of 1674. Considered by many scholars to be one of the greatest poems of the English language, "Paradise Lost" tells the biblical story of the fall from grace of Adam and Eve. The main characters in the poem are God, Satan (Lucifer)¹, Adam, and Eve. God is the creator. He creates darkness and light, the universe, earth and ocean, and plants and animals in seven days. The place of action is the universe. In his "Paradise Lost" Milton shows revolt. Being a puritan, Milton wanted to portray God as an almighty embodiment of Justice, and Satan as the villain. The poem describes the Christian story "The Fall of Man": the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Milton's purpose in writing this epic poem is to "justify the ways of God to men" and elucidate the conflict between God's eternal foresight and free will. This was written in a time when the debate about the order of the world and of the universe had reached a climax. The narrator begins "Paradise Lost" by stating that his subject will be Adam and Eve's disobedience and their fall from grace. Adam and Eve are allowed by God to live in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden, as long as they do not eat the fruit that grows on the Tree of

¹ Before his rebellion, Satan was known as Lucifer

Knowledge. Satan, who has been driven from the Garden of Eden by the guardian angels, comes back at night as a mist, and then assumes the form as a serpent. The serpent persuades Eve to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve eats an apple from the forbidden tree and plucks another for Adam. As a punishment for the sin they have committed, God the Almighty banishes them from Paradise to the newly created world, where they will face a life of toil and woes.

Milton's sympathies are with Adam and Eve, and he shows his faith in man. His Adam and Eve are full of energy. They love each other and are ready to meet whatever the earth has in store for them. Milton tried to create the extremes of "evil" and "good" in his poem. Adam and Eve are presented for the first time in Christian literature as having a full relationship. In this manner, Milton portrays Adam as a heroic figure, but also as a deeper sinner than Eve, as he is aware that what he is doing is wrong.

Purpose of thesis – is to analyze Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men. To reveal the interrelation between the Creator and the Created, and the Miracle of Creation in "Paradise Lost".

Functions of thesis are as follows:

- To analyze observation of individual settings, not on the level of content as localized sites, but more profoundly as internal, psychological spaces;
- To examine Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men;
- To draw a comparative analyses between the creation of the universe and the created men;

While discussing this great epic poem, it is interesting to find answers to these questions. Have you ever gotten really angry or sad thinking about all of the suffering in the world, about how many people struggle just to exist? Have you ever cried out in frustration, "Life is not fair! What's with all the injustice in the world?" . Nearly four hundred years ago John Milton struggled with the same questions in "Paradise Lost". At the very beginning of the poem, Milton claims that he will "assert Eternal Providence" and "justify the ways of God to men." In other words, Milton says he'll explain and defend God's ways, and will show us how everything in the world is part of a grand plan, a plan in which everyone will live happily. Milton challenges us to define our own views on this, and what we believe shapes our everyday actions. Milton states that only God is willing to give people free will which can be

considered “good” and “justified.” Milton also tells us how important freedom and choice are; there is no such thing as fate or predestination in the world he describes.

“Paradise Lost” has many elements that define epic form. It is a long, narrative poem. The poem is in blank verse . Milton expresses contempt for rhyming poetry ². “Paradise Lost” is composed in the verse form of iambic pentameter. As a perfectionist of language, he elevates the English language to its highest level of formality. Scanning the issues of Miltonic criticism, one can see the power of Milton’s originality; no other writer has provided representations of Satan and God in such controversial terms.

“Paradise Lost” begins and ends with Man, but it is neither a Man as we know him in ordinary daily life, nor as he is usually treated in literature. It is primarily concerned with an action, “Man's First Disobedience,” and the results of that action. The books open immediately after the fall of Satan and close with the fall of mankind. “Paradise Lost” is a vast but delicately balanced structure. The structure of the poem is at once massive and delicate; its language is also both rich and strong . “Paradise Lost” is at once a deeply traditional and a boldly original poem . Yet not any poem in which the climax of the central attention is a woman eating a piece of fruit can be a conventional epic.

Chapter I . XVII century of English Literature and its influence on John Milton’s creative activity.

English poets of the early XVII century are classified by the division into Cavalier poets and Metaphysical poets. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, and this dissociation was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century; Milton and Dryden. The life of John Milton falls conveniently into three divisions. Even in his early poems, Milton's literary output was guided by his faith in God. He thought that poetry should glorify God, enlighten readers, and help people to become better Christians. In 1656 though Milton was blind, he began to work on his epic works : “Paradise Lost” , “Paradise Regained”³ and “Samson Agonistes”⁴ . He recited verse each morning to one of his two daughters, they transcribed the words he dictated. Milton finished “Paradise Lost” in 1667. In 1674 he published the authoritative second edition of “Paradise Lost”.

² In a note, Milton added to the second printing of “Paradise Lost”

³ In 1671 Milton published *Paradise Regained*, It is his final work and the sequel to his great epic.

⁴ Dramatic poem of Milton , Published in 1671.”*Agonistes*” means “ in struggle”

“Paradise Lost” is a major monument- one of the last, one of the most admired- of the Renaissance tradition of Christian humanism. The conflict in “Paradise Lost” is essentially between Satan and God, and the arena in which the struggle takes place is in the heart and mind first of Eve and then of Adam.

Milton’s style based on the classical epics of ancient Greece and Rome. Milton used an unrhymed iambic pentameter line ⁵ in his epic poems.

Chapter II. The Miracle of Creation. The Creator and the Created .

Milton presents the miracle of Creation in two main ways; firstly, through his description of Eden, described in Book IV , and secondly through his description of God’s Creation of the universe in seven days, contained in Book VII. Both of the books evoke wonder in the reader and the poem’s characters.

The Creator of the world is God. He is the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent creator of the universe. God creates Man - Adam and gives him free will, knowing that Man will fall. He also provides his Son, who becomes a man and suffers from death, as the means to salvation for Man so that ultimately goodness will completely defeat evil. He would be the originator of all motivating forces.

God is the creator of Eden, Heaven, Hell, and each of the main characters. The poem portrays God’s process of creation in the way that Milton believed it was done, that God created Heaven, Earth, Hell, and all the creatures that inhabit these separate planes from part of himself, not out of nothing. The Creator knows everything before it happens. God loves his creation and strongly defends humankind’s free will.

The “Created” in “Paradise Lost” is Adam - he is the first human, created by God from the dust of Earth. He is a part of God's creation after the rebellious angels have been defeated. Adam is the first man, created perfect, but given free will, with which he can either maintain, or lose his perfect state of happiness. God tests him by forbidding him to eat the fruit of apple tree. But his love for Eve is above his obedience to God and it causes to his downfall. Besides, Adam is a strong, intelligent, and rational character possessed of a remarkable relationship with God.

⁵ the great epics of ancient Greece and Rome did not rhyme.

The second created human being is Eve. She is the first woman, created by God from Adam's rib as a companion for him. She is seduced and tricked by Satan in the form of the serpent and eats the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Eve was created as a companion for Adam. Thus, Milton does not denigrate all women through his depiction of Eve. Moreover, the modern reader must accept the seventeenth century attitude that women were second to men. Their world is expressed perfectly by their speech, their formal conversations implying mutual respect and natural gratitude.

Chapter III. Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men.

Milton begins "Paradise Lost" by saying that he will describe "Man's First Disobedience" so that he can "assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men". The theme of "Paradise Lost" is religious and has three parts: 1) Disobedience, 2) Eternal Providence, and 3) Justification of God to men. Milton means by the word *justify*, assuming that he is rather arrogantly asserting that God's actions and motives seem so arbitrary that they require vindication and explanation.

In "Paradise Lost" "*justify*" means that Milton takes it upon himself to explain the propriety of God's actions. Milton uses *justify* in the sense of showing the justice that underlies an action. Milton wishes to show that the fall, death, and salvation are all acts of God. To understand the theme of "Paradise Lost", a reader does not have to accept Milton's ideas as a vindication of God's actions; rather the reader needs to understand the idea of justice that lies behind the actions. Milton's main objective, is to "justify the ways of God to men", however, as the theme of Fall is a recurring theme in the work. It is interesting to compare the various reasons of their disobedience: Satan falls because of his pride, Adam because of his love to Eve, Eve because of her vanity. As well, we have the theme of the trinity repeated in the three fallen species.

Once again, Milton describes the earth, i.e, nature itself, shutters when Adam takes a bite of the apple. We see now that Milton actually meant that he intended to give a justification for God's actions, not just provide a narration or explanation of them. William Blake said that "Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it." He referred to the rather sympathetic nature in which Milton seems to treat Satan.

In conclusion, we see a sense of "loss" mixed with glorious redemption that Adam and Eve, and the readers leave the Garden. The final image of Adam and Eve, walking hand in hand in

search of a place in the Fall world is a reflection on the journey every man and woman must take in life. Milton balances the corruption of man with the hope of eternal life in grace to give us not a tragedy, but an epic reflection of the condition of humankind. Adam and Eve walk into their new life.

*The World was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.*⁶

Conclusion.

“Paradise Lost” is an epic in every sense of the word: vast and ambitious in scope, powerful in its language, and vivid in its depictions. Its plot proceeds inevitably from the first couple's initial bliss to their ultimate tragic fall. Milton's Satan is one of the most three-dimensional characters⁷ in anything I have ever read.

“Paradise Lost” explosively investigates mankind's expulsion from the Garden of Eden at the hands of God. “Paradise Lost” seems to do much more than to explain the reasons why God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden. The attention Milton gives to each character, and their specific personality, allows us to interpret their actions as consciously chosen deeds within the larger framework of the poem. In this poem great detail is given to the idea of "creation". The most obvious example is the creation of Adam and Eve by God. By creating the pair, God desires them to glorify his ways through their praises and deeds power. By analyzing John Milton's “Paradise Lost”, it is plain to see it is a fine example of epic poetry. The author follows the three main guidelines that construct an epic poem. By beginning in a formal way, having supernatural warfare, and engaging a character in a dark voyage.

⁶ “Paradise Lost”, Book 10, lines 1537-1540

⁷ It is a character which is described by a writer with enough skill or detail to seem real.

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Introduction

In the mid-seventeenth century John Milton was a successful poet and political activist. He wrote scathing pamphlets against corruption in the Anglican Church. During this time Puritanism meant having politically radical views.

In this period John Milton wasn't only a poet; he was also a wanted man. In the 1640s a Civil War ⁸ was raging in England. The young John Milton was all about the Parliamentarians and wrote a lot of pamphlets supporting their positions.

The great poet of the English Bourgeois Revolution ⁹ John Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608. The family had descended from English yeomen, the class that was to be the motive force during the Revolution. Milton's father had received an education and was a prosperous scrivener in London.

Milton's creative activity is divided into 3 periods. Milton composed his early verse in Latin. Unlike the learned classicists of his day, who imitated Greek and Latin versification, Milton sought to rehabilitate the English poetic tradition by establishing it as an extension or flowering of the classical tradition. Like Homer and Virgil before him, Milton became one of the epic poet of the English nation.

Object of research – The object of dissertation is the literary conception, construction, and depiction of the Creator, and the Created. Moreover, it is aimed at describing the world created in seven days. The dissertation examines the way of justification of the men by God.

Purpose of thesis – is to analyze Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men. To reveal the interrelation between the Creator and the Created, and the Miracle of Creation in "Paradise Lost".

Functions of thesis are as follows:

- To analyze observation of individual settings, not on the level of content as localized sites, but more profoundly as internal, psychological spaces;
- To examine Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men;

⁸ 1642-1651-a series of armed conflicts between Parliamentarians and Royalists.

⁹ English Bourgeois Revolution took place in 1640.

- To draw a comparative analyses between the creation of the universe and the created men;

Milton's creative activity is very rich . One of his epic poems is "Paradise Lost". It is a series of arguments put forth by the characters, which in turn ultimately expresses Milton's personal truth. The historical context of "Paradise Lost" comprises the biographical, literary, political and religious aspects of Milton's life. This was written in a time when the debate about the order of the world and of the universe had reached to climax. The earth was no longer the center of the universe.

"Paradise Lost" is an epic poem in blank verse¹⁰, one of the last works of John Milton, originally issued in 10 books in 1667 and, published in 12 books in the second edition of 1674. Considered by many scholars to be one of the greatest poems of the English language, "Paradise Lost" tells the biblical story of the fall from grace of Adam and Eve in a language that is a supreme achievement of rhythm and sound. The main characters in the poem are God, Satan, Adam, and Eve. God is the creator. He creates darkness and light, the universe, earth and ocean, and plants and animals in seven days .

The poem is in blank verse. Milton expresses contempt for rhyming poetry. "Paradise Lost" is composed in the verse form of iambic pentameter¹¹. "Paradise Lost", with its depiction of the story of Creation, the Fall of Man, and the Expulsion from Paradise, takes up precisely this theme of a radically changing world order.

We may not agree with Milton's ideas, and we may not believe what he believes, but thinking about our own freedom of choice is important. Milton challenges us to define our own views on this, and what we believe shapes our everyday actions. Milton states that only God is willing to give people free will which can be considered "good" and "justified." Milton also tells us how important freedom and choice are; there is no such thing as fate or predestination in the world he describes. Milton didn't just write "Paradise Lost" because he was upset and felt that he had lost his own paradise; he had been planning the poem for quite some time.

"Paradise Lost" is about Adam and Eve—how they came to be created and how they came to lose their place in the Garden of Eden, also called Paradise. It's the same story you find in

¹⁰ Blank verse is a non-rhyming verse.

¹¹ In this style, a line is composed of five long, unaccented syllables, each followed by a short, accented one. It is also used by Shakespeare.

the first pages of Genesis. It was expanded by Milton into a very long, detailed, narrative poem. It also includes the story of the origin of Satan. Originally, he was called Lucifer, an angel in heaven who led his followers in a war against God, and was ultimately sent with them to hell. Thirst for revenge led him to cause man's downfall by turning into a serpent and tempting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The changes that some of the settings undergo in the course of the action, as well as, the connections between their external form and their essence or the character traits of their inhabitants, are also interesting. Another starting point in this connection is the observation of individual settings, not on the level of content as localized sites, but more profoundly as internal, psychological spaces.

Milton's life in many respects was always geared towards producing a great epic to rival that of Homer and Virgil and in "Paradise Lost" he achieved that aim, and to some critics he even surpassed it. "Paradise Lost" explosively investigates mankind's expulsion from the Garden of Eden at the hands of God. It was written, supposedly, to justify the ways of God to men however, it is certainly not as straightforward as that as some suggest that Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it. "Paradise Lost" seems to do much more than to explain the reasons why God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden. "Paradise Lost" in fact could be read, controversially, as a damning exploration of the cruelty of Christianity.

Milton begins "Paradise Lost" by saying that he will describe "Man's First Disobedience" so that, he can "assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men". The purpose of "Paradise Lost" is religious and has three parts: 1) disobedience, 2) eternal providence, and 3) justification of God to men. Some readers misunderstand what Milton means by the word "justify", assuming that Milton is rather arrogantly asserting that God's actions and motives seem so arbitrary that they require vindication and explanation. However, Milton's idea of justification is not as arrogant as many readers think." Justify" means that Milton takes it upon himself to explain the propriety of God's actions. Milton uses "justify" in the sense of showing the justice that underlies an action. Milton wishes to show that the fall, death, and salvation are all acts of God. To understand the theme of "Paradise Lost", a reader does not have to accept Milton's ideas as a vindication of God's actions; rather the reader needs to understand the idea of justice that lies behind the actions.

People have often commented on the fact that, Milton himself resembles the Satan he creates in his poem; Satan who, when the story begins, has just been crushed attempted to

launch a revolution to do away with God, because he thought God was a tyrant. The similarities between Milton and the Satan he creates are huge and worth pondering.

For Milton, God doesn't predestine anybody, and his God's "ways" turn out to be just reactions to human decisions. God banishes Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and Evil enters to the world because Adam and Eve broke the rules. Simple as that. In "Paradise Lost" the point is not that Adam and Eve were unlucky or unjustly treated; they knew the rules and were given the gift of freedom of choice; they were "free to fall," as Milton's God puts it. Why were Adam and Eve given this choice? Wouldn't it have been better if there was no Tree of Knowledge? Adam and Eve's obedience to God doesn't mean much if there's no way to disobey him.

Milton first published his epic poem¹², "Paradise Lost", in 1667. A "Revised and Augmented" version, which is the one read more widely today, was published in 1674, with this following introduction. In it, Milton explains why he has chosen to compose his long poem in English heroic verse without the use of rhyme, following the models of Homer and Virgil. Milton argues that rhyme is particularly unnecessary in long poems, and that its unquestioned use by his peers, Milton sees an inflexible application of rhyme and meter as in danger of becoming rote and mathematical, and he defends the liberty he found in releasing his poem from rhyme's limitations. "Paradise Lost" has many elements that define epic form. It is a long, narrative poem; it follows the exploits of a hero, it involves warfare and the supernatural; it begins in the midst of the action, with earlier crises in the story brought in later by flashback; and it expresses the ideals and traditions of people. It has these elements in common with the Aeneid, the Iliad, and the Odyssey.

The first edition of "Paradise Lost" was published in 1667, in ten chapters or books. In 1674 Milton reorganized the poem into twelve books, by dividing two of the longer books into four. He also added an introductory prose "argument"¹³ summarizing the plot of each book, to prepare readers for the complex poetry. Part of that complexity is due to the many analogies and digressions into ancient history and mythology throughout the poem. The central story line is built around a few paragraphs in the beginning of Genesis—the story of Adam and Eve. The epic also uses elements from many other parts of the Bible, particularly involving Satan's

¹² epic poem- is a long and formally written narrative poem (ex. Homer's The Iliad, or Beowulf) that describe heroes and their adventures or some pertinent events of a particular culture or time period.

¹³ Summary explanations of the action in the various books, and prefixed the reader to later issues of the poem.

role. Focusing his poem on the events surrounding the fall of Adam and Eve, Milton intended, in his words, to “justify the ways of God to men,” by tracing the cause and result for all involved. In the last two books of the epic, Milton includes almost a complete summary of Genesis. Milton's mission was to show not only what caused man's fall, but also the consequences upon the world, both “bad” and “good”. A concept central to this story is that of the “felix culpa” ¹⁴ or fortunate fall.

For centuries critics have both praised and derided “Paradise Lost”. A common observation is that, in his portrayal of the thoughts and motivations of Satan, Milton seems to unwittingly cast him as the hero. Nevertheless, the general consensus holds that “Paradise Lost” remains the greatest epic poem in the English language.

“Paradise Lost” defines itself as an epic poem through its narrative structure, its division into books, and its use of conventions, such as the addresses to the muse and the descent from the heaven. Many scenes in Milton’s epic poems are closely modeled upon scenes in Homer and Virgil. Much of the action in “Paradise Lost” is divided into the traditional battle scenes and council scenes of epic poetry. In the invocations, the narrator specifically addresses the question of writing this epic poem and its relation to its predecessors. But Milton also places the poem within other contexts. His purpose “to justify the ways of God to men” sets the poem within the theological context of theodicy, a vindicating of God’s ways to man or, to put it in a more secular way, a proof that man’s happiness depends more on himself than on external circumstances. A system of verbal allusions and genre pattern make “Paradise Lost” assume and revise not only all previous epics, but also tragedy, divine comedy, georgic, love elegy, hymn, pastoral, prophecy, dialogue, scientific treatise, and many more genres.

To mastering great quantities of ideas, feelings, and conventions, the author must contribute something new. His ideas must be revolutionary or he may just be perfect in language what was known before. Milton accomplishes both of them. As a revolutionary, he blends the conflicting worlds of the classics and Renaissance Christianity. As a perfectionist of language, he elevates the English language to its highest level of formality. Scanning the issues of Miltonic criticism, one can see the power of Milton’s originality; no other writer, for example, has provided representations of Satan and God in such controversial terms. Satan’s power has moved some critics to see in him a version of Milton himself, the demonic revolutionary and destroyer of kings. Milton might have been struck at the effect of the

¹⁴ This is the philosophy that the good which ultimately evolves as a result of the fall.

character on his readers , but would have reproved such readings by saying that God has represented the power of Satan through him. Milton has created Satan so forcefully that many who have read “Paradise Lost” can form no other consistent image of him. The verse in which the poem is written , blank verse or unrhymed iambic pentameter , has proved a model for later writers in that form because of its consistency, and its modulations of speed and tone. All of these effects have contributed to an original picture of the world of spirits and of perfect “man” and “woman”. Milton particularized the spiritual and created its verbal image as no writer had before him.

“Paradise Lost” has become a touchstone, something we should know in order to know other things , a touchstone for elevated verse and serious discussions. The story of “Paradise Lost” is an expansion of the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis in the Bible, the story of the creation of the earth and man and man’s fall. To the account of creation and the fall , Milton added summaries of biblical history and, the most important , the fall of Satan , which Milton gathered from many sources , since there is no standard account. Milton imagined for himself what no one knew or could know: what the ideal life of heavenly beings are and what supernatural man and woman may be like.

As it is mentioned above, “Paradise Lost” begins and ends with Man, but it is neither a Man as we know him in ordinary daily life, nor as he is usually treated in literature. The poem is not the portrait of an average sensual man; it is not an essay on the abstract states of Man. It is primarily concerned with an action, "Man's First Disobedience," and the results of that action. We are all familiar with some of the results. We have experienced, partially, "all our woe." But we cannot have known the "First Disobedience"; we have at best glimpsed it in the moments of imaginative insight, in dreams or myth. This initial disobedience is to be framed by perfection, to be seen in a sequence of actions which include all time but begin before time and end after it, with the final action of "one greater Man" infinitely farther beyond our experience than the fall of the lesser but perfect man. When we begin to read a poem in which, for three-quarters of its length, there is not a single human being like ourselves. By beginning with certain modern assumptions, we could easily "prove" that what Milton has set out to do is impossible.

“Paradise Lost” consists largely of the creation of movements in a world of space and time. It is an open question whether this should be considered primarily further accommodation to the limited perception of man, or whether it is a direct revelation of the divine reality. For

Milton it seems to have believed that motion, whether physical or mental or spiritual, was the chief manifestation of vitality, the quality which, in *The Christian Doctrine*, he placed first among the purely affirmative attributes of God.

The poem's title should not lead us to expect that its motions will be solely, or even primarily, those of descent and degeneration. Of course the poem concerns "Paradise Lost," and the realization of the Fall will not be muted; within the perspectives of the moment and of human responsibility, the emotions of loss and death will be evoked - "all our woe." But we are reminded of the total perspective of time and eternity. Within these very opening lines we experience already the rhythm of loss followed by triumph:

*They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate
With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie Armes*¹⁵

The narrator begins "Paradise Lost" by stating that his subject will be Adam and Eve's disobedience and their fall from grace. He calls on a heavenly muse and asks for help in relating his ambitious story.

Although "Paradise Lost" was written by John Milton more than three centuries ago, it remains an important fixture in the Western literary canon, and its central subject continues to be a cause for scholarly debate: Is Satan a heroic figure and more importantly, how can Satan be described as an epic hero? The Romantic poets William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley saw Satan as the real hero of the poem and applauded his rebellion against the tyranny of Heaven. Many other works of art have been inspired by "Paradise Lost", notably Joseph Haydn's "The Creation" and John Keats's long poem "Endymion." Milton wrote a companion piece, "Paradise Regained", in 1671, which dramatizes the temptation of Christ.

Milton's epic begins with a rush. Carried along by the impetus of Satan's tremendous adventures, readers are apt to forget there is any other part to the poem. Indeed, while we are getting acclimated to the Miltonic world, there is no reason to hold back our sympathy with Satan, our admiration for his heroic energy. It is energy in a bad cause, clearly; but it is energy, it is heroically exercised, and there is as yet no source of virtuous power to oppose or offset it. With the appearance of Christ the Son, at the opening of Book III, we begin to see in heavenly Love the counterpoise of Satan's hellish Hate; and in Book IV, as we are

¹⁵ "Paradise Lost", Book XII, 640-650

introduced not only to Adam and Eve, but to Paradise, our sympathies gradually shift. Satan is no longer a glamorous underdog, fighting his adventurous way through the universe against enormous odds; he is a menacing vulture, a cormorant, a toad, a snake. He is not only dangerous, he is dull; whatever richness and variety he discovers in the universe serve only to produce in him envious hatred and destructiveness. His sin is incestuous, as the allegory of Sin and Death points out; it breeds out of itself ever fresh occasions of sin. Adam and Eve, who are weaker, less active, and less spectacular in every way, finally outweigh Satan in our interest and sympathy simply because they can respond to life, and to the terrifying experience of guilt, more vigorously than Satan can.

Seen overall from above, *Paradise Lost* is a vast but delicately balanced structure. Its first half rises from Hell through Chaos to Heaven, and takes place mostly in these cosmic locales; its second half opens with the word *Descend*, and is largely confined to earth, ending with Adam and Eve's descent from the Mount of Paradise to the "subjected plain" of our world. The adventure of the fallen Satan in the opening books balances the history of fallen mankind in the closing ones. Book IV, the entry of Satan into Paradise, balances Book IX, describing the loss of Paradise. Books V and X provide contrasting views of life in Eden before and after the Fall.

Within the poem's larger structure, there are all sorts of secondary balances that readers recognize for themselves. The consult in Hell is paralleled by a consult in Heaven. Eve is generated from Adam as Sin is generated from Satan; Satan's fall parallels Adam's fall, and the parallel is prolonged into that extended series of falls and recoveries in human history.

The structure of the poem is at once massive and delicate; its language is also both rich and strong. Milton's range of classical reference and gift for epithet are undoubtedly staggering at first view, and his long, complexly subordinated sentences are sometimes hard to follow.

Milton himself moved securely through the literatures of half a dozen languages and as many cultures, it is one of the supreme rewards of literary study to be able to follow him with an equivalent security.

In "*Paradise Lost*" Milton takes pains to fulfill the traditional prescriptions of the epic form; he gives us love, war, supernatural characters, a descent into hell, a catalog of warriors, all the conventional items of epic machinery. Similarly, Milton himself defined his moral purpose as being to "justify the ways of God to men". This seems no more the conventionally meek. The way of life that Adam and Eve take up as the poem ends is that of the Christian

pilgrimage through this world. Expelled from Eden , our first “ grand parents” pick up the burdens of humanity as we know them , sustained by a faith that we also know , and go forth to seek a blessing that we do not know yet. Like John Milton , and in this condition with its weaknesses and strivings and inevitable defeats, there is a glory that no devil can ever understand. Thus Milton strikes, humanly as well as, artistically, a grand resolving chord. It is the careful, triumphant balancing and tempering of this conclusion that completes the noble architecture of his poem.

“Paradise Lost” appeared originally without any sort of prose aid to the reader , but the printer asked Milton for some “ Arguments”, or summary explanations of the action in the various books and these were prefixed to later issues of the poem . The poetic vocation to which Milton was heir is both nationalistic and religious in character. The epic poet chronicles the religious history of people.

On the one hand, Milton felt that he could best serve God by following his vocation as a poet. On the other hand, his poetry would serve England by putting before its noble and religious ideas in the highest poetic form. In other words, Milton decided to write poetry which, if not directly or overtly didactic, would serve to teach delightfully. Finally, it is in “Paradise Lost” that Milton harmonizes his two voices as a poet and becomes the Christian singer, as it were, of epic English poems.

The revolutionary spirit is shown in Satan , who revolts against God, draws to his side many rebel-angels and is driven out of Heaven. But Satan is not to be overcome. He hates God who rules the universe autocratically. He expressed his thoughts as followings.

*“ Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering :but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;”¹⁶*

¹⁶ Satan’s speech. Book 1. 155-795

Though banished from Heaven, Satan is glad to have gained freedom. He possesses humane qualities. He pities the rebel-angels who have lost heavenly life for his sake. He is determined to go on with the war against God.

As it is mentioned above, Adam and Eve are allowed by God to live in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden, as long as they do not eat the fruit that grows on the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Satan, who has been driven from the Garden of Eden by the guardian angels, comes back at night as a mist, and then assumes the form of a serpent. Next morning, when Adam and Eve work in different parts of the Garden, the serpent rolls towards Eve and persuades her to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve eats an apple from the forbidden tree and plucks another for Adam. As a punishment for the sin they have committed, God the Almighty banishes them from Paradise to the newly –created world, where they are to face a life of toil and woe. The angel Michael leads them out of Paradise, waving his fiery sword behind them. From a hill, before parting, Michael shows Adam a picture of the tyranny and lawlessness which are to befall mankind.

Milton's sympathies are with Adam and Eve, and this shows his faith in man. His Adam and Eve are full of energy. They love each other and are ready to meet whatever the earth has in store for them rather than parting.

Milton also explores a cosmic battle in heaven between good and evil. Supernatural creatures, including Satan and the Judeo Christian God himself, mix with humans and acting and reacting with humanlike feelings and emotions. As in other poetic epics such as Homer's Iliad and Ulysses, the Popul Vuh, and Gilgamesh, Milton actually attempts to describe the nature of man by reflecting on who his God is and what his origins are. By demonstrating the nature of the beings who created mankind, Milton presents his, or his culture's views on what good and evil mean, what mankind's relationship is absolute, what man's destiny is as an individual and species. The story, therefore, can be read as a simple narrative, with characters interacting with each other along a plot and various subplots. It can also, however, be extrapolated out to hold theological and religious messages, as well as, political and social themes.

In his epic poem, "Paradise Lost", John Milton addresses the role of woman and man within the institution of marriage. More specifically, he explores why such a bond is considered sacred within the context of his Protestant religion. The book of Genesis offers two guidelines for an ideal marriage, both exemplified in the relationship between Adam and Eve.

The first account states, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave into his wife: and they shall be one flesh” . A contextual reading gives the reader the impression that God encourages man and wife to pursue a spiritually enriched relationship, in which they share such intimate feelings that they seem to become a single person. The second account translates the word of God, “Be fruitful and multiply” . This statement asserts that procreation is an important aspect of an ideal marriage. Milton’s own account of Genesis within “Paradise Lost”, supports the first account, but does not discount the latter.

It is a fact that ,people today still regard this poem as one of the great poetical texts of all time. Milton develops in Satan the first English language version of the anti-hero. Milton created in “Paradise Lost” a portrayal of humanity's fall from bliss and expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Chapter I. XVII century English Literature and its influence on John Milton's creative activity.

When we talk about knowing God, it must be understood in terms of man's limited powers of comprehension. God, as he really is, is far beyond man's imagination, let alone his understanding.

John Milton

According to the usual division of English literary history by periods, the "early seventeenth century" extends from the accession of the first Stuart king (James I) in 1603 to the coronation of the third (Charles II) in 1660.

English poets of the early XVII century are classified by the division into Cavalier poets and metaphysical poets, the latter being much concerned with religion. Metaphysical poetry of the XVII century is characterized by a marked dependence on irony and paradox and by the use of the conceit, as well as, such figures as catachresis and oxymoron. In its earlier manifestations English metaphysical poetry was further distinguished by revolutionary and highly original attitudes toward sexual love.

In the seventeenth century, John Milton was a successful poet and political activist. In Milton's day Puritanism meant having politically radical views. With the obvious and important exceptions of Milton and Marvell, plus a scattering of minor poets like Francis Quarles and George Wither, very little of the enduring literature of the early seventeenth century was the work of Puritans. And at one point Milton was actually jailed for recording them on paper. Milton's "Areopagitica", is an influential and impassioned philosophical defence of the principle of a right to freedom of speech, written in opposition to licensing and censorship, as an eloquent defence of press freedom. We may also add to this Milton's religious epic "Paradise Lost". "Paradise Lost", as much as anything, is a series of arguments put forth by the characters, which in turn ultimately expresses Milton's personal truth. It is, in that sense, a Puritanical work. Milton had contemplated the composition of an epic poem for many years. For his subject matter he chose the fundamentals of Christian theology. He began writing "Paradise Lost" in the late 1650's.

The life of John Milton falls conveniently into three divisions. There is a period of youthful education and apprenticeship, which culminates in the writing of *Lycidas* and Milton's foreign travels. There is a period of prose and controversy, when his major preoccupations were political and social; and finally, there are the last fourteen years of his life, when he returned

to literature, a mature and somewhat embittered figure, to publish his three major poems, “Paradise Lost” (1667), “Paradise Regained” (1671), and “Samson Agonistes” (1671).

The greatest poet of the seventeenth century , John Milton was one of the Puritan writers. The Puritan movement produced the best-selling prose writer of the century. It was while at the Cambridge University that Milton decided to prepare himself as a great poet- “ God’s Poet” –he described it.

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London. He excelled in school and became fluent in many foreign and classical languages, including Italian, Greek, Latin, Aramaic, Hebrew, French, Spanish, Anglo-Saxon, and some Dutch. He wrote sonnets in Italian as a teenager. While he was a second-year student at Cambridge, he was invited to address the first-year students in a speech written entirely in Latin. In 1639, the outbreak of civil war in England compelled him to cut short his studies in Italy. After working for the Commonwealth, he retired to his estate and by 1652 he was completely blind. In 1660, he had to go into hiding to escape execution at the hands of the restored monarchy. His exile brought him the opportunity to work on “Paradise Lost”. Milton's epic was immediately recognized by critics and the admiring comments of the respected poets John Dryden and Andrew Marvell helped restore Milton to favor. Milton spent the ensuing years writing prolifically at his residence in Bunhill. He died at home on November 8, 1674. He had built a firm poetic foundation through his intense study of languages, philosophy, and politics, and he infused it with his uncanny sense of tone and diction. Even in his early poems, Milton's literary output was guided by his faith in God. Milton believed that all poetry serves a social, philosophical, and religious purpose. He thought that poetry should glorify God, enlighten readers, and help people to become better Christians. Aside from his poetic achievements, Milton was also a prolific writer of essays and pamphlets. In the mid-1650s, Milton returned to the story of Adam and Eve, a topic he had initially envisioned dramatizing as a verse play. In 1656 Milton, now blind, began work on his epic. He recited verse to one of his two daughters, who transcribed the words he dictated. Milton finished “Paradise Lost” in 1667. It was published in the same year in ten books. Milton soon revised his epic, reorganizing it to form twelve books in the style of the classical epic.

In 1674 he published the authoritative second edition of “Paradise Lost”. In 1671 Milton published “Paradise Regained”, his final work and the sequel to his great epic. The religious beliefs expressed in “Paradise Regained” pleased Milton, who thought this work surpassed

“Paradise Lost” in both artistry and content. Most modern readers consider “Paradise Lost” the great epic. These two contrasting aspects of Milton’s life and thought place him within the long tradition of Renaissance Christian humanism. His literary art places him in the small circle of great epic writers. At the age of sixteen, Milton already aspired to write the great English epic. As he read the classical epics in school—Homer’s “Odyssey” and “Iliad” and Virgil’s “Aeneid”—he began to fantasize about bringing such artistic brilliance to the English language.

From this point, until the English Civil War broke out, Milton devoted himself to a life of study. Many feminist arguments about John Milton’s “Paradise Lost” accuse the poet of misogyny, asserting that Eve’s character is a negative reflection of women, even as an opposing camp of critics see Milton’s Eve as a revolutionary depiction of equality between the sexes, and “Paradise Lost” as a subversively feminist text. Eve is portrayed, in many passages, as a paragon of seventeenth-century virtue and domesticity. Eve’s conflicting speech and behavior during key scenes about knowledge, however, showcase a more ambitious side of Eve, one who ignores the domestic sphere in favor of a more masculine education.

In the writings of Milton, the work of two tremendous intellectual and social movements are mentioned. The Renaissance is responsible for the rich and complex texture of Milton’s style, the multiplicity of its classical references, its wealth of ornament and decoration. “Paradise Lost”, being an epic, not only challenges comparison with Homer and Virgil, but undertakes to encompass the whole life of humankind—war, love, religion, hell, heaven. It is a poem vastly capacious of worldly experience. The great epic is also a poem of which the central actions take place inwardly, at the core of the human conscience. Adam is Milton’s epic hero, but unlike his classical predecessors, his fate culminates in an act of passive suffering, not of active heroism.

Milton considered many topics suitable for his epic. He initially warmed to the story of “King Arthur” and the “Knights of the Round Table” and later hoped to write an epic about Oliver Cromwell, who took control of England in 1653 after helping to dethrone and execute King Charles. These two topics suggest Milton’s desire to write his epic on a distinctly British topic and thereby inspire nationalist pride. These early possible topics, like Homer’s and Virgil’s nationalist epic, feature strong, virtuous warriors and noble battles. Eventually, Milton abandoned both of these ideas and for a time gave up the notion of writing an epic. In his twenties, Milton wrote five masterful long poems, each of them influential and important in its

own way. These poems are “On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,” “Comus,” “Lycidas,” “Il Penseroso,” and “L'Allegro.” In these poems Milton honed his skills at writing narrative, dramatic, elegiac, philosophical, and lyrical poetry. He had built a firm poetic foundation through his intense study of languages, philosophy, and politics, and he infused it with his uncanny sense of tone and diction. Even in these early poems, Milton's literary output was guided by his faith in God. Milton believed that all poetry serves a social, philosophical, and religious purpose. He thought that poetry should glorify God, enlighten readers, and help people to become better Christians.

A sense of deep disquiet, traditions under challenge is felt everywhere in the literary culture of the early seventeenth century. For Milton, with his deep sense of moral imperative, his heroic ambitions for poetry, and his proud English Protestantism, the fashionable verses of his contemporaries must have seemed unbearably constricting. Like any great artist, Milton was capable of profiting from the study of craftsmen with temperaments and styles very different from his own, and he did profit by a study of Donne and Jonson. But for his central inspiration Milton reached back beyond Metaphysicals and Jonsonians to a potent predecessor- Edmund Spenser.¹⁷

Milton's style was fully formed by the late 1630s- it is usual to say that he found his voice in “Lycidas” which was written in 1637, and he might well have proceeded to complete one or more of these visionary projects. But it is not altogether a loss that the civil wars intervened and prevented him for twenty years from engaging his mind full-time with poetry. Thus, when Milton returned to his epic ambitions after 1660, neither he nor his potential audience was anything like what it had been before the wars. Chivalric romance was out of the question, the issue on Milton's mind, and the nation's, was whether God maintained, behind the chaotic reversals of history, a sustaining plan for his favored people. It had to be approached through the central and very simple biblical narrative of creation, fall, and redemption.

As the work of Milton's fifties, “Paradise Lost” was deeper, larger, more evangelical than anything he might have written in his thirties, it was well suited to a nation that had just passed through a massive spiritual crisis. Its author could never have dramatized so vividly the twin temptations of pride and despair had he himself not experienced both in full measure. But “Paradise Lost” was also, inevitably, the product of Milton's surpassingly thorough classical

¹⁷ The great nondramatic poet of the Elizabethan Era .(XVI century)

education. It is thus a major monument- one of the last, one of the most admired- of the Renaissance tradition of Christian humanism. This is the assurance , shared by many writers of the period , that classical learning and the classical virtues when joined in the service of Christian faith, strengthen both it and themselves. Gathering together in a grasp of unparalleled amplitude these major strands of European culture and forging them into a poised and balanced structure of epic dimensions, Milton created a poem that would be regarded for centuries as a supreme literary achievement.

“Paradise Lost” reflects Milton’s humanistic love of poetry and his Puritan devotion to God. In Book I of “Paradise Lost” , Milton voices his poetic ambition to create “ things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme.” A few lines later he asserts his religious aim: to “ Justify the ways of God to men.” The poem is both a heroic epic that recounts the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden and a vindication of God’s wisdom. The conflict in “Paradise Lost” is essentially between Satan and God , and the arena in which the struggle takes place is in the heart and mind first of Eve and then of Adam . The most illuminating insights into the struggle however, come from the mind of Satan , which is always conscious of the beauty of goodness.

Milton based his poem on the Biblical story of Adam and Eve and his style on the classical epics of ancient Greece and Rome. Milton divided “Paradise Lost” into twelve books. He wrote the poem in blank verse , which few poets writing in English had done before except in plays. Milton chose blank verse , which uses an unrhymed iambic pentameter line, because the great epics of ancient Greece and Rome did not rhyme.

In his famous essay "The Metaphysical Poets", T. S. Eliot identifies the poetry of Donne and some of his contemporaries as exhibiting a kind of "unified sensibility," which, he argues, was lost to English poetry after Milton. We may express the difference by the following theory: The Poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience.

Meanwhile Milton had pursued his defence of individual liberties, in the conviction that all men naturally were born free, being the image of God himself. His public role in the forging of the English Republic was confirmed in 1649 by his pamphlets attacking monarchy and justifying the regicide of Charles I. With renewed leisure for poetry he completed “Paradise

¹⁸ A closet tragedy- is not intended for the stage

¹⁹ Satan’s speech. Book IV 79-83

Lost” and the verse drama “Samson Agonistes” .Milton was a polymath even by Renaissance standards. Although he had asserted, publicly in *Defensio Secunda* and privately in letters , his conviction that his life should be dedicated to a great literary work, his early poems and letters show signs of a self-doubt engendered by what he regarded as his own dilatoriness. Immersed in controversy during the 1640s and 1650s , he considered his pamphlets work of his “ left hand” merely.

“Paradise Lost” is a vast but delicately balanced structure. Its first half rises from Hell through Chaos to Heaven , and takes place mostly in these cosmic locales; its second half opens with the word Descend, and is largely confined to earth, ending with Adam and Eve’s descent from the Mount of Paradise to the “ subjected plain” of our world. The adventure of the fallen Satan in the opening books balances the history of fallen mankind in the closing ones. At the centre of the poem, balanced as on a fulcrum , are the account of the destructive war in Heaven (Book 6) , and that of the Creation (Book 7).

Within the poem’s larger structure , there are all sorts of secondary balances that readers can recognize for themselves. The consult in Hell (Book 2) is paralleled by a consult in Heaven (Book 3); Eve is generated from Adam ,as Sin is generated from Satan; Satan’s fall parallels Adam’s fall, and the parallel is prolonged into that extended series of falls and recoveries that is human history .

Milton himself defined his moral purpose as being to “ justify the ways of God to men” . This seems no more the conventionally meek. Yet we cannot even think of equating the message of Milton’s poem with Pope’s injunction to “ submit” because “ whatever it is right” . The way of life that Adam and Eve take up as the poem ends is that of the Christian pilgrimage through this world. Expelled from Eden , our first “ grand parents” pick up the burdens of humanity as we know them , sustained by a faith that we also know , and go forth to seek a blessing that we do not know yet. Milton strikes humanly as well as artistically , a grand resolving chord. It is the careful, triumphant balancing and tempering of this conclusion that completes the noble architecture of his poem, and that makes the end richer , if not a more exciting experience than the beginning.

In 1671, Milton published “Paradise Regained”. The title suggests some sort of sequel, but, although a great work in its own right. “Paradise Regained” is a very different kind of poem, shorter and more contemplative than action oriented, and therefore less popular than the earlier work. It centers around the confrontation between Jesus and Satan in the wilderness.

“Paradise Regained” is connected by name to Milton’s earlier and more famous epic poem “Paradise Lost”, with which it shares similar theological themes. It deals with the subject of the Temptation of Christ. The poem was based on the Gospel of Luke's version of the Temptation of Christ. “Paradise Regained” is four books in length. One of the major concepts emphasized throughout “Paradise Regained” is the play on reversals. As implied by its title, Milton sets out to reverse the "loss" of Paradise. Thus, antonyms are often found next to each other throughout the poem, reinforcing the idea that everything that was lost in the first epic is going to be regained by the end of the mini-epic. Additionally, this work focuses on the idea of "hunger", both in a literal and in a spiritual sense. After wandering in the wilderness for forty days Jesus is starved of both food and the Word of God. Satan, too blind to see any non-literal meanings of the term, offers Christ food and various other temptations, but Jesus continually denies him.

“Samson Agonistes” is a tragic closet drama ¹⁸. It appeared in 1671. It is generally thought that “Samson Agonistes” was begun around the same time as “Paradise Regained” but was completed after the larger work, possibly very close to the date of publishing, but there is no agreement on this. “Samson Agonistes” is a blank verse play. The work is heavily indebted to Greek tragedy, but with a Biblical hero. This mix of two different cultures presents Samson as a tragic hero, who rather than raging against the Olympian deities, supplicates himself to the one, true Christian God, whom he calls upon to save him. Samson's blindness has led many to see him as a character with whom Milton identified with strongly.

“Samson Agonistes” plays out the final part of Samson's life, in which he is chained in Gaza. He was tricked by his lover Delilah, his hair was shorn, and he lost his God-given strength. He is a slave and he is torn with the guilt that he betrayed God by giving up the secret he was commanded to keep close (that the source of his strength was his hair).

A powerful and affecting drama, “Samson Agonistes”, was written as a chamber play, and was therefore not to be performed. Perhaps because of the standing of plays under Puritan rule--they were considered frivolous and sinful--Milton did not want to be associated with the theatre. What's more, he thought that his message would be best served by being approached philosophically rather than dramatically. He wanted his work to be mused over whilst being read rather than passively accepted as a theatre audience might.

Milton had expressed his ambition to write an epic nearly 30 years before “Paradise Lost” was begun in 1658 and completed in 1663, its appearance being delayed by both the Great

Plague and the Great Fire.

As we see, “ Paradise Lost” gradually expounds the nature of Satan in the way an Elizabethan tragedy delineates the villain. Milton’s epic represents Milton’s coming to terms with the Satan of his imagination, and we , as readers must follow Milton’s example.

In our reactions to Satan we must keep in mind the art that created him. Milton grappled with his own creation. But the focus of the poem is the Fall. Satan is always seen in relation to that event, not as a separate force contending within God . Two emotion Milton wished Satan to produce in the reader’s mind are wonder and anger. Milton presents Satan sympathetically at certain points. Satan is struck by the beauty of Paradise and by the love of Adam and Eve.

*Which way I fly is Hell; myself I am Hell;
O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath , whom I seduced¹⁹*

Chapter II. The Miracle of Creation. The Creator and the Created

Milton presents the miracle of Creation in two main ways; first, through his description of Eden, centered upon Book IV, and second, through his account of God's Creation of the universe in six days, contained in Book VII. Both books IV and VII evoke wonder in the reader and the poem's characters. There is a difference between these creations. In Book VII, Creation is an action, whereas in Book IV we see Eden, already created, reflecting God's providence in its ever changing countenances.

For Milton, the action of Creation consists of the imposing of order and form specifically the Platonic Forms- upon the raw material of Chaos. Despite the difficulties posed by such a belief, Milton is neither dualist, nor materialist. The Chaotic raw material of Creation is not evil, for which imputes evil to the finished product. The operation of God's Creative Power upon an object rather than upon nothing, helps to explain why Milton's account of Creation is perhaps the most dynamic ever written.

Milton describes his God as the Creator of the world. He is the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent creator of the universe. He is depicted as a pure light by Milton and rules from an unmovable throne at the highest point in Heaven. God is the epitome of reason and intellect; qualities that often make him seem aloof and stern in the poem. His more merciful side is shown through his Son who is one of the Trinitarian aspects of God though not the same as God. God creates Man and gives him free will, knowing that Man will fall. He also provides his Son, who becomes a man and suffers death, as the means to salvation for Man so that ultimately goodness will completely defeat evil. God is the originator of all motivating forces. His "behavior" could not be measured with respect to propriety. But in any story, the rules of plot structure require the interplay of these forces. So Milton embroils his God in a power struggle, and shows him using his power of prophecy to carefully engineer an intricate balance of justice, mercy, and the "loophole" through which man can redeem himself from his fall from grace.

All the outcomes within the story can be traced to what God does or does not allow, since he has a power to control everything. Therefore, the most interesting way to approach an analysis of God's character is to figure out why he holds back his power in any given situation, and lets things progress to their natural chance, or man-made conclusion, whether the result may be good or bad.

God is the creator of Eden, Heaven, Hell, and of each of the main characters. While depicted as pompous, irascible, selfish and obnoxious, he is an all-powerful and all-knowing

being who cannot be overthrown. The poem portrays God's process of creation in the way that Milton believed it was done, that God created Heaven, Earth, Hell, and all the creatures that inhabit these separate planes from part of himself, not out of nothing. Thus, according to Milton, the ultimate authority of God derives from his being the "author" of creation. Satan tries to justify his rebellion by denying this aspect of God and claiming self-creation, but he admits to himself this is not the case.

The Creator knows everything before it happens. Attempting to present such an unimaginable character accurately, Milton appropriates several of God's biblical speeches into his speeches in "Paradise Lost." God loves his creation and strongly defends humankind's free will. He presents his love through his Son, who performs his will justly and mercifully. He has no weakness. He explains why certain events happen; like Satan's decision to corrupt Adam and Eve; he tells his angels what will happen next, and gives his reasoning behind his actions in theological terms. God allows evil to occur, but he makes good out of evil. His plan to save humankind by offering his Son shows his unwavering control over Satan.

The Son is presented to the angels well after the creation, and God's preferment of the Son causes Satan to rebel. The Son offers himself as a sacrifice to Death as a way to save Man after the Fall. The Son also defeats the rebellious angels and casts them into Hell. He shows the more merciful aspect of God. The Son of God in *Paradise Lost* is Jesus Christ, though he is never named explicitly, since he has not yet entered human form. The Son is very heroic and powerful, singlehandedly defeats Satan and his followers when they violently rebel against God and drives them into Hell.

For Milton, the Son is the manifestation of God in action. While God the Father stays in the realm of Heaven, the Son performs difficult tasks of banishing Satan and his rebel angels, creating the universe and humankind, and punishing Satan, Adam and Eve with justice and mercy. After the fall, he pities Adam and Eve and gives them clothing to help diminish their shame. His decision to volunteer to die for humankind shows his dedication and selflessness. The final vision that Adam sees in Book XII is of the Son's sacrifice on the cross—through this vision, the Son is able to calm Adam's worries for humankind and give Adam and Eve restored hope as they venture out of Paradise.

The first created - Adam - is the first human, created by God from the dust of Earth. He is part of God's creation after the rebellious angels have been defeated. At first, Adam can talk with angels and seem destined to become like angels if they follow God's

commands. Adam was created perfect, but was given free will, with which he can either maintain or lose his perfect state of happiness. God tests him by forbidding him to eat the fruit of one tree. Placing his love for Eve above his obedience to God proves his downfall. When Adam finds out that Eve has broken this commandment, rather than survive without her, he eats also, thereby losing Paradise and eternal happiness for himself and the world. Adam eats the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge because he cannot bear losing Eve. His inordinate desire for Eve is his downfall. Adam and Eve feud after the fall but are reconciled. They eventually go forth together to face the world and death.

God creates mankind to replace eventually the emptiness in Heaven left when the rebel angels were cast out. He creates the universe for people to live in first, where they will be tested and made ready for Heaven to accept them. Milton recounts the early history of man as told in the Bible, through prophetic visions and revelations given to Adam. The ways in which God creates in “Paradise Lost” focus mainly on acts of physical creation. Adam tells Raphael about his own memory of his first hours:

*Said mildly, Author of all this thou seest
Above, or round about thee or beneath.
This paradise I give thee, count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat: .*²⁰

As it is mentioned above, Adam is the first human in Eden created by God. He is more intelligent than Eve and is also stronger, not only physically but morally. From the questions he asks the angel Raphael, it is clear that Adam has a deep, intellectual curiosity about his existence, God, Heaven, and the nature of the world. This is a kind of curiosity that Eve does not have. As opposed to the Biblical Adam, this version of Adam is given as a glimpse of the future of mankind by the angel Michael, before leaves Paradise. After God passes sentence on him, laying on the cold ground, Adam delivers a long, emotional speech expressing self-recrimination, terror of death, and pity for the future of mankind, which concludes with a shocking verbal attack against Eve .

*To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier farr.
Let us descend now therefore from this top*

²⁰ “Paradise Lost”, Book X, 580-545

*Of Speculation; for the hour precise
 Exacts our parting hence; and see the Guards,
 By mee encampt on yonder Hill, expect
 Thir motion, at whose Front a flaming Sword,
 In signal of remove, waves fiercely round;
 We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;²¹*

Adam is a strong, intelligent, and rational character possessed of a remarkable relationship with God. In fact, before the fall, he is as perfect as a human being can be. He has an enormous capacity for reason, and can understand the most sophisticated ideas instantly. As a result of the fall, he loses his pure reason and intellect. Adam's greatest weakness is his love for Eve. He falls in love with her immediately upon seeing her, and confides to Raphael that his attraction to her is almost overwhelming. Though Raphael warns him to keep his affections in check, Adam is powerless to prevent his love from overwhelming his reason. After Eve eats from the Tree of Knowledge, he quickly does the same, realizing that if she is doomed, he must follow her into doom as well if he wants to avoid losing her. Eve has become his companion for life, and he is unwilling to part with her even if that means disobeying God. Adam's curiosity and hunger for knowledge is another weakness. The questions he asks of Raphael about creation and the universe suggest a growing temptation to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. But like his physical attraction to Eve, Adam is able to avoid this temptation. It is only through Eve that his temptations become unavoidable.

*Adam to Eve: O, fairest of creation, last and best
 Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
 Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
 Holy, divine, amiable or sweet,
 How can I live without thee, how forego,
 Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joyed?²²*

When they are driven out of Eden, Eve says to Adam:

*But now lead on:
 In me is no delay; with thee to stay
 Is to go hence unwillingly; thou to me*

²¹ "Paradise Lost", Book XII, 645-590

²² "Paradise Lost", Book VIII.480-490

Art all things under heaven , all place, thou

Who for my willful crime art banished hence

Eve is the first woman, created by God from Adam's rib as a companion for him. She is physically more attractive than Adam, but not as strong physically or intellectually. She is seduced and tricked by Satan in the form of the serpent and eats the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. She then tempts Adam whose love and desire for her is so strong that he eats the fruit rather than risk of separation from Eve. Ultimately, Eve brings about reconciliation with Adam when she begs forgiveness from him. God promises that her seed will eventually bruise the head of the serpent. She is the first woman, created as a companion for Adam. She is subservient to Adam, but does not hesitate to argue with him. Satan targets her as the weaker sex, and tempts her to eat the forbidden fruit. She succumbs to his temptation, and decides to talk Adam about joining her in what at first seems like a good thing for both of them, but later brings terrible remorse. Their mutual love, together with God's mercy, sustains them and provides a conclusion to the story which is not without hope. Eve's soliloquies before and after her sinful act are notable, as first she ruminates over Satan's persuasive argument, enhancing it with her own rationale, and afterwards considers not sharing the fruit with Adam, thereby raising herself to his level of wisdom by its imagined powers, or perhaps even, she thinks, a little higher.

In a positive sense ,Eve is the model of a good wife. She consents to Adam leading her away from her reflection when they first meet, trusting Adam's authority in their relationship until she is influenced by Satan. She is extremely beautiful, and her beauty not only obsesses Adam but also herself. Created to be Adam's mate, Eve is inferior to Adam, but only slightly. She surpasses Adam only in her beauty. She falls in love with her own image when she sees her reflection in a body of water. Ironically, her greatest asset produces her most serious weakness- vanity. After Satan compliments her on her beauty and godliness, he easily persuades her to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Aside from her beauty, Eve's intelligence and spiritual purity are constantly tested. She is not unintelligent, but she is not ambitious to learn, content to be guided by Adam as God intended. As a result, she does not become more intelligent or learned as the story progresses, though she attains the beginning of wisdom by the end of the poem. Her lack of learning is partly due to her absence for most of Raphael's discussions with Adam in Books V, VI, and VII, and she also does not see the visions Michael shows Adam in Books XI and XII. Her absence from these important exchanges shows that

she feels it is not her place to seek knowledge independently. Eve's strengths are her capacity for love, emotion, and forbearance. She persuades Adam to stay with her after the fall, and Adam in turn dissuades her from committing suicide, as they begin to work together as a powerful unit. Eve complements Adam's strengths and corrects his weakness.

Thus, Milton does not denigrate all women through his depiction of Eve. Rather he explores the role of women in his society and the positive and important role he felt they could offer in the divine union of marriage. The character Eve in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* knows and acknowledges the fact that, she is inferior to Adam and that she is more likely to disobey God's orders. She is intelligent, but she is satisfied with following God's orders through Adam. She is also very beautiful. In fact she is more beautiful than Adam, even though she was created from a rib belonging to Adam. But beauty, her greatest asset, also brings out her greatest weakness.

Eve is inferior to Adam. She stays and listens to Raphael and Adam talk about various things like the creation of the universe. Even though she is intelligent, she does not become knowledgeable during the course of this book while Adam learns a lot of things during the length of "*Paradise Lost*". By doing this, she acknowledges the fact that she is inferior to Adam and will blankly follow him without knowing anything or thinking for herself. In the end her lack of knowledge is acknowledged by Michael when he puts her to sleep while he shows Adam the vision of the future.

All in all, we can say that Eve is intelligent but not as knowledgeable as Adam which shows that she is inferior to him. Another thing that can be noticed about Eve is that she is very rational. If the debate between Adam and Eve are examined carefully, Eve seems more rational than Adam. The argument between Adam and Eve in Book IX, where Eve tells Adam that they should work separately so that they can get more done, is a very good and important example of this. She begins by telling him that there are many advantages of working separately. First, she says that, they will get more done without getting distracted by each other's looks. She also says that, it will give them a sense of satisfaction and make their dinner more enjoyable and deserved. Adam replies by saying that it is not such a good idea because she is likely to get swayed by Satan when she is alone than when she is with him. In reply Eve says, in a hurt tone that she is sad that he does not trust her and that they can't be hurt physically or mentally by Satan who is now mortal.

While analyzing this debate, Eve is the one that makes the most sensible arguments ,whereas Adam's claims are true but weak. While it is the factor that She gains Adam's love and it makes her so valuable to him, it is also the factor that she brings the Fall upon the ancestors of Mankind.

This is the weakness that Satan targets when he tries to persuade Eve to eat the Fruit.

*“Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole Wonder, much less arm
Thy looks, the Heav'n of mildness, with disdain,
Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feard
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd.
Fairest resemblance of thy maker faire,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admir'd; but here
In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd
By Angels numberless, thy daily Train.”²³*

Satan uses her beauty to his advantage and says that she is as beautiful as a goddess. Even though this is only the prologue to the big speech he is about to give, this has a tremendous effect on Eve. The praise catches her attention and she gives in to his flattery. When Satan gives his speech, where he tells her that there is nothing to be afraid of, every single word sinks in and she believes him. Her beauty gets in the way of the way of her ability to think clearly which leads her to eat the apple. She eats the apple, she falls and the rest of mankind follows.

In conclusion, Eve's character in Paradise Lost is a very interesting one. Her beauty is her power but it is also mankind's curse. Her beauty and arrogance make her susceptible to the

²³ Paradise lost , Book IV 775-725

Serpent's speech. She falls for Satan's praise and his oratory skills. As a result she gets mankind kicked out of paradise. In all the debates between her and Adam she emerges victorious, partially because Adam loves her with his life but also because her arguments are well reasoned. This is also another reason that contributed to the Fall. The last but not the least, interesting character is her behavior. She knows that she is inferior and less knowledgeable than Adam and that she will never be as good as him. Milton's first depiction of Eve presents her frankly as sexual companion intended to attract Adam to produce us. From this height of happiness Milton must make plausible the Fall. Satan, when he first appears in "Paradise Lost", he was fallen, but Adam and Eve are within their sphere perfect, though perfectible to higher realms of spirituality.

The difficulties Milton faced in creating his couple were similar but more complex than those he faced when creating his godhead. God is a remote ideal; but human perfection is denied everywhere. Here God is portrayed as the great originator of everything in all of creation. To be the "author" of something is to be the creator, much the same way as Milton himself is creating the world of the poem. In virtually every instance the act of "authoring", is associated with images of primacy and legitimacy. As the story of the creation is retold, God is called the, "Author and end of all things". In reference to God, the word author is used, to describe the timelessness of God's rule. He authored the world by creating it, and will be there to see its end. God looks over the world as a literal father does over his own children.

Unlike characters in a realistic novel, Milton's couple are ideal. They are beautiful, spontaneously intelligent, loving, gracious in speech, in harmony with their environment, and natural poets. Their lives have meaning because they have unrealized goals, for instance, to rise in the hierarchy of being to a more spiritual state. But their progress is assured if they obey, so their future is under their own control. Their world is expressed perfectly by their speech, their formal conversations imply mutual respect and natural gratitude.

It would be better, if Adam and Eve knew that they are doing wrong in eating the fruit of the garden. Where do they get a knowledge of good and evil? Milton tells us in his *Aeropagitica*²⁴ that man knows good only by knowing evil. If this was true for Adam and Eve, the Fall would be the only track to experience and to eternal life. But before the Fall, humanity can know good by means of firsthand experience and evil through the imagination. God tells them that eating the fruit is evil and so its result is death. The author dramatizes in

²⁴ It is a pamphlet written in 1644 by John Milton.

human terms the evil of the war in heaven. "The crisis of *Paradise Lost*" comes when Adam and Eve experience a conflict between what they know is wrong – eating the fruit – and what they desire, to satisfy their passions. We know that if their passions are strong, their intellects are strong as well. Milton doesn't share the romantic conception of the omnipotence of passion, especially in Eden. He believes that Adam and Eve freely chose to give in, though not without many extenuating circumstances that weakened, but it did not destroy their will.

Milton devotes many of the poem's early books to developing Satan's character. Satan's greatest fault is his pride. He casts himself as an innocent victim, overlooked for an important promotion. But his ability to think so selfishly in Heaven, where all angels are equal and loved and happy, is surprising. His confidence in thinking that he could ever overthrow God displays tremendous vanity and pride. When Satan shares his pain and alienation as he reaches Earth in Book IV, we may feel somewhat sympathetic to him or even identify with him. But Satan continues to devote himself to evil. Every speech he gives is fraudulent and every story he tells is a lie. He works diligently to trick his fellow devils in Hell. Satan is one of the first major character introduced in the poem. A beautiful youth, he is a tragic figure best described by his own words "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven".²⁵ He is introduced to Hell after a failed rebellion to wrestle control of Heaven from God. Satan's desire to rebel against his creator stems from his unwillingness to accept that all beings don't deserve freedom, declaring the angels "self-begot, self-raised", thereby eliminating God's authority over them as their creator. Satan's character changes significantly from Book I to his final appearance in Book X. In Book I, he is a strong, imposing figure with great abilities as a leader and whereas by the poem's end he slinks back to Hell in serpent form. Satan's gradual degradation is dramatized by the sequence of different shapes he assumes. He begins the poem as a just-fallen angel of enormous stature, then disguises himself as a more humble cherub, then as a cormorant, a toad, and finally a snake. His ability to reason and argue also deteriorates. In Book I, he persuades the devils to agree to his plan. In Book IV, however, he reasons to himself that the Hell he feels inside of him is reason to do more evil. When he returns to Earth again, he believes that Earth is more beautiful than Heaven, and that he may be able to live on Earth after all. Satan, removed from Heaven long enough to forget its unparalleled grandeur, is completely demented, came to believe in his own lies. He is a picture of incessant intellectual activity without the ability to think morally. Once a powerful angel, he has become blinded to

²⁵ "Paradise Lost". Book I. Satan's speech

God's grace, forever unable to reconcile his past with his eternal punishment. Satan is portrayed as charismatic and persuasive. Satan's persuasive powers are first evident when he makes arguments to his angel-followers as to why they should try to overthrow God. He argues that they ought to have equal rights to God and that Heaven is an unfair monarchy. The role of Satan in the poem has been the subject of many scholarly debates. His envy of the Son creates Sin, and in an incestuous relationship with his daughter, he produces the offspring, Death. His rebellion is easily crushed by the Son, and he is cast into Hell. His goal is to corrupt God's new creations, Man and Earth. He succeeds in bringing about the fall of Adam and Eve but is punished for the act. He can shift his shape and tempts Eve in the form of a serpent. He appears noble to Man but not in comparison to God.

After Adam and Eve disobey God by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, God sends the angel Michael to visit Adam and Eve. His duty is to escort Adam and Eve out of Paradise. But before this happens, Michael shows Adam visions of the future which cover an outline of the Bible, from the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis, up through the story of Jesus in the New Testament.

Milton's mission was to show not only what precipitated man's fall, but also the consequences upon the world, both "bad" and "good". The most famous and most effective of the stories incorporated here is that of Noah. In this story, Michael illustrates to Adam the tragic doom of a generation of his sinful offspring, but also inspires him with hope for a new beginning.

Some readers consider Satan to be the hero, or protagonist, of the story, because he struggles to overcome his own doubts and weaknesses and accomplishes his goal of corrupting humankind. This goal, however, is evil, and Adam and Eve are the moral heroes at the end of the story, as they help to begin humankind's slow process of redemption and salvation. Satan is far from being the story's object of admiration, as most heroes are. But soon after admiration of Eve, Satan recalls the pleasure of heaven that was taken away from him when he was cast out.

*"That space the Evil One abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the first time remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge;
But the hot hell that always in him burns,*

*Though in mid-heav'n, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure not for him ordained: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects*"²⁶

One source of Satan's fascination for us is that he is an extremely complex and subtle character. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, for Milton to make perfect, infallible characters such as God the Father, God the Son, and the angels as interesting to read about as the flawed characters, such as Satan, Adam, and Eve. Satan, moreover, strikes a grand and majestic figure, apparently unafraid of being damned eternally by such terrifying figures as Chaos or Death. Many readers argue that Milton deliberately makes Satan seem heroic and appealing early in the poem to draw us into sympathizing with him against our will.

Whether originating from Satan or from God, creation in "Paradise Lost" is accompanied by issues concerning free will. No matter how anything is supposed to behave within the poem, something interferes with the designs of man, Satan, and to some extent, God. God's original design for mankind is corrupted by Satan. The hopes of Adam and Eve are foiled by the plot of Satan. The Fall is upturned by the redemption of man through the Son. The great movers of the poem have their plans cancelled by each other. Importantly, all the action which we see within the plot of the poem revolves around this point. The architecture of creation, in any form, drives the action of both the characters in the narrative, and generates meaning for the reader.

Against this backdrop, "Paradise Lost", with its depiction of the story of Creation, the Fall of Man, and the Expulsion from Paradise, takes up precisely this theme of a radically changing world order. The revolutionary poets of the 19th century said that in "Paradise Lost" Milton refused to accept the conventional Bible-story. Adam and Eve are Man and Woman – the finest of all earthly creatures.

Chapter III. Milton's attempt to justify the ways of God to men.

²⁶ "Paradise Lost", Book X.1100-1020

Milton begins "Paradise Lost" by saying that he will sing, "Of Man's First Disobedience" so that he can "assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men" . The purpose of "Paradise Lost" is religious and has three parts: 1) Disobedience, 2) Eternal Providence, and 3) Justification of God to men. Frequently, readers and those casually acquainted with "Paradise Lost" misunderstand what Milton means by the word *justify*, assuming that Milton is rather arrogantly asserting that God's actions and motives seem so arbitrary that they require vindication and explanation.

However, Milton's idea of *justification* is not as arrogant as many readers think. Milton does not use the word *justification* in its modern sense of proving that an action is proper. "*Justify*" means that Milton takes it upon himself to explain the propriety of God's actions. Rather, Milton uses *justify* in the sense of showing the justice that underlies an action. Milton wishes to show that the fall, death, and salvation are all acts of God. To understand the theme of "Paradise Lost" , a reader does not have to accept Milton's ideas as a vindication of God's actions; rather the reader needs to understand the idea of justice that lies behind the actions.

"Paradise Lost" begins with Milton describing what he intends to undertake with his epic: the story of Man's first disobedience and the "loss of Eden," subjects which have been "unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." His main objective, however, is to "justify the ways of God to men." The poem then shifts to focus on the character of Satan who has just fallen from heaven. The scene opens in a fiery, yet dark, lake of hell. Satan, dazed, seems to be coming to consciousness after his fall and finds himself chained to the lake.

Book I introduces the main subject matter of the poem: the creation, fall, and redemption of the world and humankind. Milton invokes the aid of the muse and the Holy Spirit as he sets out to perform "Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme," and, through the medium of the epic, to "justify the ways of God to men." In true epic style, Milton begins his story in mid-action after the great battle in Heaven and the fall of the rebel angels. The poem thus introduces its readers first to Satan, the cause of the fall of humankind, at the moment following his own first fall into Hell. Satan and his angels are described lying on a lake of fire in a place where flames cast no light, but only "darkness visible." Satan is the first to rise and, use his great spear as a walking stick, limps to the shore. He awakens his legions, addressing them in a stirring speech and rousing them to action. He informs them of his hope of regaining Heaven and of the rumour of a new world to be created which they might yet make their own,

if heaven be closed to them. He determines to call a full council and sets his host to work to build a suitable palace from which to rule Hell. The result of their efforts is Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, and there the angels of Hell enter to begin their council.

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject: man's disobedience and the loss of Paradise wherein he was placed, then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who, revolts from God and draws to his side many legions of angels, who was driven by the command of God out of heaven with all his crew into the great deep. The poem hasts into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into hell—described here, not in the center, but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called chaos. Here Satan with his angels lay on the burning Lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him; they confer of this miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till, in the same manner confounded. They rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. Satan directs his speech to them, comforts them with the hope of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophesy or report in heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient fathers. To find out the truth of this prophesy, and to determine thereon, he refers to a full council; what his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep; the infernal peers there sit in council.

*Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire²⁷*

"Paradise Lost" begins with a prologue in which Milton performs the traditional epic task of invoking the Muse and stating his purpose. He invokes the classical Muse,²⁸ Urania, but also refers to her as the "Heavenly Muse," implying the Christian nature of this work. He also

²⁷ Paradise Lost, Book I 795-5

²⁸ One of the characteristics of epic was to begin with an invocation to a muse.

says that, the poem deals with man's disobedience toward God and the results of that disobedience. He concludes the prologue by saying he will attempt to justify God's ways to men. Following the prologue and invocation, Milton begins the epic with a description of Satan, lying on his back with the other rebellious angels, chained on a lake of fire. The poem thus commences in the middle of the story, as epics traditionally do. Satan, who had been Lucifer, the greatest angel, and his compatriots warred against God. They were defeated and cast from Heaven into the fires of Hell. Lying on the lake, Satan is described as gigantic; he is compared to a Titan or the Leviathan. Next to Satan lies Beelzebub, Satan's second in command. Satan comments on how Beelzebub has been transformed for the worse by the punishment of God. Still he adds that it is his intention to continue the struggle against God, saying, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven".

With effort, Satan is able to free himself from his chains and rise from the fire. He flies to a barren plain, followed by Beelzebub. From the plain, Satan calls the other fallen angels to join him, and one by one they rise from the lake and fly to their leader. As they come, Milton is able to list the major devils that now occupy Hell: Moloch, Chemos, Baalem, Ashtaroth, Astarte, Astoreth, Dagon, Rimmon, Osiris, Isis, Orus, Mammon, and Belial. Each devil is introduced in a formal cataloguing of demons. These fallen angels think that they have escaped from their chains through their own power, but Milton makes it clear that God alone allowed them to do this. This devil army is large and impressive but also aware of its recent ignominious defeat. Satan addresses them and rallies them. He tells them that they still have power and their purpose will be to oppose God, adding, "War then, War". Open or understood, must be resolved" . This speech inspires the devil host, and under Mammon's direction, they immediately begin work on a capital city for their Hellish empire. They find mineral resources in the mountains of Hell and quickly begin to construct a city. Under the direction of their architect, Mulciber, they construct a great tower that comes to symbolize the capital of Hell, Pandemonium. The devil army, flying this way and that, is compared to a great swarm of bees. When the work is done and the capital completed, they all assemble for the first great council.

A brief introduction mentions the fall of Adam and Eve caused by the serpent, which was Satan, who led the angels in revolt against God and was cast into hell.

In fact, Satan says, they must work to instill evil in all good things so as to always anger God. Satan gathers his closest twelve around him . Music plays and banners fly as the army of

rebel angels comes to attention, tormented and defeated but faithful to their general. They could not have known the extent of God's might, Satan tells them, but now they know and can now examine how best to beat him. Satan has heard of a new kind of creation that God intends on making, called man. They continue the war against heaven. The army bangs their shields with their swords in loud agreement.

Milton introduces his first book with a simple summary of what his epic poem is about: the Fall of Adam and the loss of the Garden of Eden. He tells us that his heavenly muse is the same as that of Moses, that is, the spirit that combines the absolute with the literary. There is some background in the past tense, then suddenly the reader finds himself in the present tense on a fiery lake in hell. The quiet introduction, the backing into the story, then the verb change and plunge into the middle of the action, in medias res, creates a cinematic and exciting beginning. On this lake we meet Satan, general and king of the fallen rebel angels.

Milton's portrait of Satan has fascinated critics since the publication of "Paradise Lost", leading some in the Romantic period to claim that Satan is, in fact, the heroic protagonist of the whole work. Certainly Milton's depiction of Satan has greatly influenced the devil's image in Western art and literature since the book's publication. In this first chapter, the reason for his downfall is that he thought himself equal to God. Hell, however, has not taught him humility, and, in fact, strengthens his resolve to never bow to the Almighty God.

Satan is often called a sympathetic character in "Paradise Lost", despite being the source of all evil, and reader is presented with some of Satan's frustration. Satan tells his army that they were tricked, that it wasn't until they were at battle that God showed the true extent of his almightiness. If they had been shown this force previously, not only the rebel angels would not have declared war on heaven, but Satan, also, would never have presumed that he himself was better than God. Now they have been irreversibly punished for all eternity, but, rather than feel sorry for themselves or repent, Satan pushes his army to be strong, to make "a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Hell reflecting heaven and, later, earth reflecting both, will be a common theme throughout the work.

Many of the structures and symbols are similar. In heaven and hell there is a king and a military hierarchy of angels. In most cases, however, they reverse of each other. In Book I, we are shown that the most prominent thing about hell is its darkness, whereas heaven is full of luminous light. As well, the fallen angels, previously glorious and beautiful, are now ugly and disfigured. These mirror, and therefore reverse, images of heaven and hell also work on a

theological level. The darkness of hell symbolizes the distance Satan and his army are from the luminous light and grace of God. Simultaneously, the rebel angels pulled away from God by their actions and are forced away by God himself, outside of all the blessings and glory that come with God's light and into the pain and suffering that comes with distance away from him. The physical corruption and disfigurement that occurs to all the fallen angels is symbolic of the corruption which has occurred in their souls. Hell is described as a belching unhealthy body, whose "womb" will be torn open to expose the "ribs" of metal ore that are necessary to build Satan's temple. Natural occurrences in Hell, such as the metaphor of the eclipsed sun, are symbols of natural, and therefore spiritual decay.

Psychological motivations also work in reverse in Hell. Hell is punishment for turning away from the "good", but instead of learning his lesson, Satan becomes more stubborn and more proud. While heaven is a place where all are turned toward the good and toward pleasing and obeying God, Satan makes hell a place turned away from God and turned deliberately toward displeasing him. Whereas, before falling from heaven, Satan was only guilty of presuming to be greater than God, now Satan becomes a creator himself. He has created evil, the direction away from God.

Other critics have examined the political implications of Milton's Hell. Like Dante's Hell, the characters and institutions in Milton's Hell are often subtle references to political issues in Milton's day. A full understanding of the metaphors and images that Milton uses, however, take more than a knowledge of his contemporary history or religious background. Describing Satan's kingdom, Milton takes from a myriad of sources, including Greek mythology and epic poetry, Egyptian religious traditions, the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and apocryphal texts, the Church Fathers, popular legends, and other theological texts.

It should be noted that, in the epic tradition, Milton used poetry to tell his story, following most prominently the style of Homer. The work, therefore, can also be examined through the lens of poetry with an eye toward rhythm and sound. In the first sentence, Milton used an alliteration to conduct what is referred to as a double discourse: "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree."

Book II recounts the council of the demons and their deliberations concerning whether to attempt further battle in order to regain Heaven.

The consultation began, Satan debates whether another battle is to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven; some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned

before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophesy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal or not much inferior to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search; Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to hell gates, finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by chaos, the power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

A debate is held whether or not to attempt recovery of heaven. A third proposal is preferred, concerning an ancient prophecy of another world which was to be created, where the devils may seek to enact their revenge. Satan alone undertakes the voyage to find this world. He encounters Sin and Death, his offspring, guarding hell's gates. Sin unlocks the gate, and Satan embarks on his passage across the great gulf of chaos between heaven and hell, till he sights the new universe floating near the large globe, which is called heaven.

The description of Hell is very interesting. It has a geography like earth, with rivers and mountains, but "where all life dies, death lives and nature breeds, perverts, all monstrous, and all prodigious things." Hell is all the worst of nature: natural disasters, violent streams and volcanoes, unfriendly seas, darkness. Satan flies to the gates of hell where he meets two beings guarding the gate. One is Sin, half woman, half serpent with group of hell hounds howling around her. The other is Death, a large black shape that stands in front of Satan, blocking his path. Satan knocks him down by throwing pestilence and war at him. Sin scolds Satan, and tells him that she is his daughter, born in heaven when Satan first thought of rebelling. Later, they were lovers in heaven and she and Satan produced Death, their son. Satan tells them he is trying to get out of hell to find earth. If he finds it, and there is a race called man, then the three of them can rule it together and Death's hunger will never be satiated. Sin opens the gates of hell, which now can never be shut, and they gaze at the abyss of Night and Chaos. Satan flies for a time in the darkness and then comes to the throne of Chaos and his consort, Night. Satan tells him he is only passing through, trying to find earth. Chaos tells him the way to earth, which is connected to heaven by a golden chain. With each of the demon's proposals to fight heaven, we see a reflection of a number of different worldly concepts of "good and evil", "heaven and hell".

Milton, with the devils, has his own idea of how good and evil is balanced and, with the devils, refuse the others as impossible. These constructs include: an eternal war between good and evil, evil's submission to good and hope of redemption, and the opposite yet equal kingdoms of good and evil. All these suggestions do not work for the devils, and, Milton suggests they do not work theologically either. First, there can be no open warfare between heaven and hell, because it would be an exercise in futility. Second, evil will never go away. The fallen angels will always exist, they will never be forgiven, they will never be accepted back by God.

Finally, there can be no peace between heaven and earth, as Mammon suggests. Hell will exist, but it will not be an equal empire to heaven. Evil will exist, but it will not be equal to good. There is no equality here. Evil, though the furthest from God, is still under God's reign. This particular concept we see reflected even today when cartoons are drawn of the devil and the good angel whispering into the left and right sides of a character's ear. Revenge of the fallen angels will be taken out against man, though Milton suggests that in the end good will win over.

By drawing Hell as a nature gone wrong, Milton also attempts to answer the age-old question of why, if God created this beautiful earth, does it sometimes seem to go against us. Why is there famine, flood, and fire that kill and destroy? Milton demonstrates that these events are nature perverted, nature not as it was intended to be. These events were caused by the creation of Hell and evil after Satan's fall. Finally, in this book we are introduced to the first of a number of parallel trinities that Milton compares and contrasts.

Book III opens with a prologue, often called "The Prologue to Light," that is addressed to the "holy light" of God and Heaven. In this prologue, Milton asks for God's light to shine inwardly so that he can reveal what no man has seen. Following the prologue, Milton reveals God, the Son, and the Heavenly Host in Heaven. God looks toward Earth and sees Satan approaching the home of Man. A council takes place in Heaven. This council is mainly made up of a discussion between God and the Son on how Man will respond to Satan's wiles and what the ultimate resolution will be. God says that Man will be corrupted by Satan's treachery but that the evil will redound to Satan himself.

Man's failure to resist temptation is, however, Man's fault since God has provided Man with both the reason and the will to resist these temptations. Nevertheless, because the fall of

Satan and the other rebellious angels is worse than Man's ²⁹fall. God offers Man mercy through grace. God adds, however, that unless someone is willing to die for Man, Man will have to face death: Divine justice requires that penalty for Man's transgression. The Son says that he will suffer death but also overcome it and, through this sacrifice, redeem Man from Man's sin.

Meanwhile Satan alights upon the outer shell of the new creation, where he finds an opening to the universe within. He flies down to the sun, upon which an angel, Uriel, stands guard. Disguised as a cherub, Satan pretends he has come to praise God's new creation, and thereby tricks the angel into showing him the way to man's home. God sees Satan heading toward the world and points him out to his Son, sitting on his right hand. He tells his son how Satan is going to tempt man and how man is then going to fall. "Ingrate," God says of man. "He had of me all he could have; I made him just and right, sufficient to have stood, though free to fall."

Even though God knows man will fall, as opposed to Satan, man still has a chance to gain God's grace, since he was led to evil by Satan. Satan, on the other hand, freely choose evil without any temptations. God says, then, that there will be a chance for God's grace for mankind, but that mankind will always be cursed with Death. His Son, of course, offers to die for man, "I for his sake will leave Thy bosom," he says. And then the Son comes back and conquers death himself. God agrees, and tells of how his Son will be born to a virgin and die so that God's favorite creation, man, will live. God makes him the king of man, son of both man and God. God tells the angels in heaven to bow to him. The scene switches back to Satan who has arrived in the Limbo of Vanity and the Paradise of Fools, the place where all men and nature go who have vain hopes of achieving heaven while on earth by pursuing riches or superstitions.

Satan paces on semi solid land. Satan sees also the Gate to Heaven and the stairway to the gate. As well, there is a large passageway, though it will soon be made smaller, that brings angels down to God's creatures on earth. Satan flies up to the sun where he can see all of creation. He spies Uriel, one of God's angels, guarding the earth. Satan turns himself into a cute little cherub and asks Uriel where this new creature of God's is so that he may go and admire it. Uriel is impressed that an angel would want to leave heaven to check out God's creation, and he directs Satan to man's home in Paradise.

²⁹ the angels fell because of personal failures; Man fell only because of outside forces

Milton introduces the character of God and Son with preparatory phrases of praise, almost a hymn, describing the nature of God and Heaven. From stanzas 1-55, Milton uses the idea of light to represent this nature. Alternately, light is used to describe God himself, the first born Son, the immortality of God, the glory of God, grace, truth, wisdom, and physical light. Heaven is a place, full of light but much of it is an invisible light, i.e. the light of wisdom, that man cannot perceive in the same manner as physical light but which works in the same way.

The reader is introduced to the characters of God and his Son, watching Satan from the heaven. The Trinity of God, Son, and Holy Spirit ³⁰ is juxtaposed against the evil Trinity of Satan, Death, and Sin, a relationship originating in lust. Milton relates love and goodness with reason and the reason is clear in even a conversational sense in the holy trinity, between God and his Son. Corruption and evil, however, are tied to the irrational and thus to the unholy trinity. The battle between Satan and Death, all emphasis Milton's view on relationships based outside of God's grace. Heaven's council is a peaceful, rational conversation between God and his Son, both of whom seem to see and understand the same things. Decisions are made rationally given the circumstances that God's all-seeing eye can predict. Hell's council, on the other hand, argued and debated, their opinions clouded by the distance from goodness, which is here equivocated with reason. A path motivated by revenge, is not one of right reason, and therefore is unpredictable.

However, the reaction from the heavenly council, God asks if someone would volunteer to redeem man's moral crime. Just as it was when volunteers were asked for in hell to tempt man to fall, no one in heaven is willing to undertake the task of saving him. Finally, the Son volunteers which places him on a parallel with Satan. The implication is that, though God is all powerful, his Son and Satan are more on equal footing in that they can equally impact the destiny of man. Through the resurrection, the theology goes, death no longer has the same grip it did before, it is not a permanent state merely a place that all men can now pass through.

Milton's universe is structured fairly simply: earth is in the middle, tied to heaven above it and a constructed bridge to hell leading below it. Between the earth and hell is Chaos. In concentric circles, or invisible globes surrounding earth, are the various orbits of the sun and moon, stars and planets around the earth .

Remembering always that "Paradise Lost" is a poem, it must be noted the structure of lines 56 through 79 as God looks down at his creation. God starts by seeing all the good things,

³⁰ the one who inspired Milton to write

including his creation of Adam and Eve. Then he pans over to hell and chaos, and finally to Satan himself flying toward Paradise. The paragraph gives equal time to nature as pure and nature as corrupted. Sentences in the middle of these two equal parts deal with love. Therefore, the subdialogue is that love is what divides corrupted nature from pure nature. This circular paragraph structure, with a discussion literally circulating around one theme is a poetic tool employed by Milton throughout the story.

Paradise is described as a natural wonderland. Satan spots Adam and Eve who "in naked majesty seemed lords of all." All the animals are playing peacefully around them or lying lazily beside them. Satan is struck wordless. He finds them beautiful, but he is compelled to do what, if he was not damned, he would abhor. Adam and Eve are conversing about their life. Theirs is one of continuous and sensuous joy, the only thing they cannot do is eat from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Eve recollects the moment when she was first created. The first thing she did, was walk to a lake where she saw her reflection and a voice told her who she was looking at. Then she meets Adam who, she notices, wasn't exactly as beautiful as her own reflection. The sight of Adam and Eve crushes Satan. He mourns his own loss in hell, fierce desire unfulfilled in joy and love. Uriel tells Gabriel that he was fooled by Satan and now Satan is somewhere in the Garden. Gabriel tells Uriel that he will find Satan before morning. Adam and Eve talk about the stars, say a prayer, and then go to sleep. Gabriel hunts and finds Satan. Satan explains that he wanted to escape the pain of hell and so came to paradise. Gabriel does not believe him and tells him to go back to hell or he will personally drag him there. Satan, being angry, prepares to fight. Gabriel tells him to look up at the stars to see "how he is weighted." In the stars, it is clear that Satan will be trampled by Gabriel, so Satan leaves on his own accord.

In this chapter we are given more insight into the character of Eve and Satan. As Eve narrates her first waking moments after her own creation, we are immediately introduced to Eve's weakness - vanity. She awakes near a lake and sees an image of herself and thinks the image is beautiful. Modern readers, especially coming from a feminist perspective, might view Eve's admiration of herself not as vanity or a weakness, but rather as a gesture of self-confidence and independence from man. This self confident, independence, however, is quickly lost. It is quite clear Milton believes in the traditional patriarchal system, complete with the gender stereotypes of XVII century Europe. Milton views the hierarchy of Adam being submissive to God and Eve being submissive to Adam as a natural God-given order :

"God is thy law, thou mine," Eve says, "to know no more is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise." Later, when both Raphael and Michael come to visit the pair in separate episodes with messages from God, Eve leaves the conversation and only Adam hears the message. The implication, of course, is that it is men who are in contact with God, and women are to learn about God only through men.

Satan, as a character, has lost some of his original glamour and reader sympathy. It is clear that, Satan's argument for fighting against God is increasingly irrational. He clearly regrets his decision, the sight of so much light and beauty in the Garden of Eden and the creatures of Adam and Eve seem to break his heart. He even admits, for the first time in the poem, that God loved him when Satan was serving him. Why did he continue? Satan's character in this book sums up Milton's view of evil from a psychological and theological viewpoint.

Theologically, it is highly irrational, and therefore outside of the grace of God. Satan remembers heaven, he remembers what goodness is, he knows how to act good, and yet he refuses to do so. He has knowledge, but he uses it irrationally.

Psychologically, of course, Satan is in increasing pain, especially when he comes close to beauty and God's light. He is no longer simply in physical pain when he is in the geographic location of hell, he is hell and brings this hell wherever he goes. His remorse is tangible.

The description of Eden, and man's job in it, reflects Milton's theology on a broader level as well. Eden, as discussed before, is ordered, tame, domiciled nature. Still, Adam and Eve must wake every day and go to work. Their work, however, is pleasurable. It appears to consist, mostly, of trimming a few bushes, looking into each other's eyes, and praising God and his creation. It is easy work and Adam and Eve enjoy it. In the same way, love, and, it is arguable, even sex has taken place in the Garden between Adam and Eve. But they have a pure, uncorrupted love. It is untainted by lust, the animal instincts, and free from ego. In the same way that the work in the Garden is a joy because Adam and Eve are in constant praise of God, love and love making in the garden are pure and a joy because the couple is practicing unselfish, rational love. Milton again takes the characteristics of the macrocosms, in this case the ordered nature of the Garden, as a reflection of how the ethics of the microcosm should work, in this case the morality of man. In the same way that Eden is ordered, not prone to radical bursts of natural cataclysms, but maintaining a steady growth under God's rule, man himself should order his passions with reason and keep them steady under God's eyes. If this is done, then mankind, like the Garden, will grow healthy and safe. Later, Eden, and creation at

large, will become uncontrollable. Floods, fire, famine, harsh weather will all make man's life difficult. Animals will prey on other animals, violence will exist at all levels of nature, fear will be commonplace. In the same way, post-Fall man will have to deal with his nearly uncontrollable passions and corruption. But in this pre-Fall Eden and Adam, life is ordered, good, directed toward God. Much is made of the astrology and astronomy in Milton as seen in the later end of this Book IV. Suffice it to say here that, theologically, it follows the same ordered reason theme as the Garden and as Adam and Eve's love. The sun, moon, planets, and stars turn in an ordered manner, following a destined plan. God is actually Aristotle's unmoved mover, the first cause, who first pushes the outer "globe" of the cosmos to set all the other cosmos in motion. When Adam and Eve fall, the earth becomes difficult, Adam and Eve's relationship is corrupted, and the cosmos themselves become irrational.

Turning to the poetic elements of the text, Milton's use of the epic simile is worth pointing out. An epic simile is one in which the image is not just referred to, but elaborated, perhaps forming a complete scene of incident itself. Milton uses this epic simile as a window into a smaller story, a window which takes one away from the immediacy of the story at hand and often brings one to another part of the world all together.

In Book V, As Adam and Eve wake up, Eve reports a troublesome dream in which an angel-like being tempted her to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. After first hesitating, she ate from the fruit. Adam is troubled by Eve's dream but, after discussing possible sources of the images with her, concludes that the dream is not necessarily evil, that Eve is too pure to do evil, and that the events of the dream will not actually come true. As Adam and Eve turn to their daily obligations, God and the seraphim Raphael look down on them from Heaven. God says that he pities the humans because he knows they will yield to temptation. Still, he sends Raphael to Eden to remind Adam that he and Eve have free will, that Satan intends to tempt them to evil, and that they have the power to resist Satan, as well as the free will to give in. In the Garden, Raphael explains to Adam that eventually he and Eve may be able to attain a pure state and be like the angels. He adds the caveat, though, that Adam must remain obedient to God. When Adam questions whether he can actually be disobedient, Raphael reminds Adam that God has given the humans free will; Adam's obedience to God is up to him. Adam is sure that he could never disobey God, but some questions have entered his mind. He asks Raphael to tell him the story of the rebellious angels. Raphael tells the story of the great rebellion in Heaven.

God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand—who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know . God sends the angel to warn Adam. Adam sees Raphael coming and tells Eve to prepare a meal for the heavenly guest. They sit down to eat. Raphael reminds Adam that he has free will and warns him of Satan's intentions to corrupt God's creation. Raphael gives some history on Satan: Satan first turned when God begot his Son and announced to all heaven that the angels must worship him. All the angels do worship the Son, but later that night Satan speaks to his second in command and tells him to gather their forces in the northern hill Satan convinces one half of the angels in heaven to join him because of his great leadership as an angel. God, of course, sees what Satan is up to and discusses it with his Son. The Son agrees to defeat Satan. Satan erects a temple on a northern hill that replicates God's own temple. There, Satan addresses the angels that followed him and incites them to rebellion. Only Abdiel stands up in the crowd and objects, but none of the others join him. He leaves proudly and is allowed to fly back to heaven.

The concept of Satan's original disobedience stemming from pride, i.e. not wanting to bow down to the Son, is seen in many Jewish and Christian traditional myths . After all, Satan was one of God's top angels, he had served God unfailingly to arrive at that position, and, in some traditions, was considered God's first and favorite angel. To make an angel who has worked so hard bow before someone else seems somehow unjust.

God as a tyrant is an interesting paradox in Milton. It is clear that heaven is a monarchy, with no room for dissent. Interestingly, Satan's councils seem much more democratic in the sense that individuals other than Satan are allowed to stand and voice their sometimes opposing views. Milton's point, however, is that right actions done irrationally³¹ do not count as right. A tyranny ruled by reason and goodness is better than one ruled by passions and animal instincts. Although the councils of Satan's angels appear democratic now, it soon becomes clear that they are led by lies and deception. Along with the repeated theme of the Fall , Milton uses again and again the "coming down" of supernatural spirits, Gods, devils to intervene or meddle in the goings-on of earth and creation. Satan departs from his kingdom to come to earth, Raphael is sent by God to warn Adam. Later, Michael the archangel comes with his mission, and, finally, the Son himself is prophesied to come in the form of Jesus Christ. Language in lines 388-390 correlates Eve, mother of mankind, mother of God. Indeed,

³¹ out of God's will

Eve's seed that is prophesied to crush out the serpent is Jesus Christ. The language of these lines shares many words with the "Hail Mary" Christian prayer, not the least of which is the first line: She is called "the mother of mankind."

Milton makes a political critique with his rather strange allusion to cannons and gunpowder. A new invention at the time of his writing, many of Milton's contemporaries actually did view the use of cannon and gunpowder as a weapon inspired by the devil. Perhaps analogous to nuclear warfare in our own time, the use of artillery was revolutionizing the way wars were won. They increased the efficiency of war, that is, they increased the amount of casualties possible in a small span of time. In a sense, the use of artillery was somehow cheating, somehow taking away from the honor of war, and therefore originated from a less than honorable source.

Milton actually gives a rather poetic technical description of how the cannon works. The "touch of fire" is where the cannon is lit, actually called a touch-powder. There are no coincidences in Milton, every number, every reference to a star, nearly every word is a clue or key to another meaning. On a very superficial level we can see this in Milton's numerology. The third day of battle, of course, corresponds to the three days Jesus Christ was in the tomb in the Christian New Testament. Christians believe that when Christ was resurrected on the third day, raised from the dead, he defeated death. So when the Son goes out on the third day to battle Satan and his army, Satan's defeat is a direct correlation with Jesus Christ's victory over death. It is notable that the Son battles the whole of Satan's army without any help from the God's angels. Likewise, Jesus Christ's crucifixion and death was faced without any help from angels.

Book VI continues Raphael's account of the war in Heaven and opens as Abdiel makes his way back to God from Satan's hosts in the North. The other angels welcome Abdiel and take him before God, who praises the loyal angel for standing for truth. God appoints Michael and Gabriel to lead the Heavenly forces against Satan's army. However, God limits the number of the Heavenly force and its power becomes equal to that of Satan's hosts. Book VII opens with another prologue to Urania³². In this prologue, Milton asks Urania to bring his thoughts down from Heaven and back to Earth and to inspire him once more to rise above his physical limitations. Returning to the scene in Eden, Adam asks Raphael to relate the story of the creation of the world. Raphael replies that after the rebellious angels were defeated, God

³² who in classical mythology was the Muse of Astronomy

wished to add a new creation so that no place in the universe would seem unpopulated by the absence of the fallen angels. He decided to create Mankind to live on Earth. Through obedience to God's will, Man would finally unite Earth with Heaven. God sent the Son forth to create Earth and the heavens that surround it. The Son accomplished this creation and hung Earth on a chain suspended from Heaven. Then God began the creation that would lead to Man. Raphael's account here closely follows the story of creation in Genesis, in which over a period of seven days, God creates the foundations of life (light, firmament, the seasons of the year, and so on) and then life itself, beginning with fish and other creatures and culminating in the creation of Man. Raphael concludes his description of the creation with an account of the rejoicing in Heaven over God's handwork. Raphael relates to Adam how God sent his Son to create a new world and new creatures to fill the place left by the fallen angels. The seven days of creation are described. Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created: that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory and attendance of angels to perform the work of creation in seven days; the angels celebrate with hymns the performance.

Adam continues his conversation with Raphael in Book VIII. He asks Raphael about the movement of the stars and planets. God has made some things unknowable. Ultimately, Raphael adds, the complexities of the universe are beyond Man's comprehension and Man should be satisfied with what God allows him to know. Then Adam tells Raphael, who was on a mission to guard Hell when God made Adam, the story of how Man was created. Adam asks Raphael about how he, man, came to be, how the earth was created, and why? Raphael tells him that after Satan's fall, God saw that heaven had lost half of its population. God decides to populate heaven with a creature who, given free will, would earn their way into his glory. With a direct Biblical allusion, Raphael relates the story of creation. Here, Milton uses the order and, in some cases, word for word description used in the first and second chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew Bible.

Theologically, Raphael gives God's reason for creating man, and man's universe, in the first place: in order to repopulate heaven. Man is designed to work his way to an angelic state by keeping correct, rational order to his passions, as discussed in Book IV. Milton reminds us throughout the poem that he is writing an epic and tying himself to a grand tradition by calling for the muse before he begins writing many of the episodes. In this Book, Milton

actually calls on the Holy Spirit to be his inspiration, setting up a competition with Homer and Vergil who called on pagan muses to be theirs.

Together with that, Adam describes his creation. Adam says that he awoke in a green and flowery bank and was immediately able to stand erect, run and jump, and, even though he was not certain who he was or where he came from, he nonetheless knew the names of the various plants and animals and could speak. Then, when he fell asleep, a dream vision appeared and led him to Eden. When Adam next woke, he saw God, who explained the creation and made the one prohibition — that Adam is prohibited to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Aside from that one proscription, Adam would have dominion over the rest of Earth. God had all the animals come before Adam in pairs, and he named them, discovering that God had provided him with knowledge of the nature of each animal. At this point, Adam explained to God that he was lonely and needed a companion. God, having already planned a companion for Adam, put him to sleep. Even though unconscious, Adam was aware of what happened through the eye of his "fancy", which God kept awake. From Adam's rib, God created a female companion, Eve, with whom Adam immediately fell in love. At first, Eve ran from Adam, but he eventually convinced her to follow him.

Adam explains to Raphael that he overcame with love and desire for Eve because of her physical beauty. He knows that Eve is less close to God than he, but he feels literally weakened by her attractiveness. Raphael takes issue with Adam, explaining that Eve has been created as his inferior. She is outwardly beautiful, but on the interior, spiritually, she is not Adam's equal. He says that his real love for Eve comes from their spiritual and intellectual companionship. Finally, Raphael admonishes Adam to remember God's warning and to be on guard for Satan's treachery. He also tells Adam not to allow passion to overcome reason and cause him to disobey God. With that, the two beings, man and angel, part; Raphael toward Heaven, Adam to his bower. Adam inquires concerning celestial motions, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation: his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society, his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon, who, after admonitions repeated, departs. Adam asks Raphael about the heavens. In the meantime, Eve goes to take care of her garden. Raphael talks about heaven a bit, and even mentions creatures living on other planets, but ends by saying that Adam and Eve should not get too curious about other worlds or how heaven

functions. Such questions and curiosity may lead them astray of their function on earth. Adam and Raphael have a discussion about love: how love must be pure, not a carnal or a passionate love. Carnal love is what the beasts enjoy and God gave Adam a woman, not a beast, so he should practice a high love.

The creation of Eve foreshadows what will ultimately become the cause of Adam's fall: following the guidance of his own baser, more animalistic elements that are convinced by Eve's beauty. Adam tells Raphael of his concern for how he feels about Eve. Although he knows her to be a weaker creature by nature, Adam is sometimes fooled by her beauty. Milton, who had three wives himself, says some pretty strong things about women in this passage. Basically, he places Adam, the male, not only at the head of the household, but naturally placed there because he is wiser, more virtuous, more discreet and the best.

Twilight falls on the Garden of Eden. Satan slips into the garden in the form of mist. He then hides himself in the snake. While going through Eden, Satan again laments his loss of heaven when he sees how beautiful a creation paradise is. Morning comes and Adam and Eve go out to tend the garden of Eden. Eve suggests they split up and divide the work to get more of it done. Adam doesn't think this is a good idea, but relents when Eve implies that he doesn't trust her. Satan, of course, finds Eve alone and, for a moment overcome by her beauty, finds himself "stupidly good." In the form of a serpent, then, Satan flatters her, telling her how beautiful she is. Eve is amazed that the serpent knows how to speak and asks how this is possible. Satan replies that it is because he ate from a tree in the garden. He brings her to the Tree of Knowledge to show her. Eve, at first, says she cannot eat from the tree, but Satan tells her that God doesn't want her to eat because knowledge of good and evil will make her equal to a God. Eve takes an apple and devours it. She then decides, because of her love, to involve Adam. They meet in front of the tree. Adam is upset, but decides he cannot live without Eve, so he takes the apple as well. When he eats the apple, they realize for the first time that they are naked. Adam sews together fig leaves to cover themselves. Adam blames Eve for their torment. Eve blames Adam for letting her work in the garden alone. Adam blames Eve for being angry about that, and they spend the afternoon blaming each other.

Milton wrote at the cusp of the Renaissance. The emerging sciences, arts, and literature point to a different sense of the individual than that of the dark ages. Milton was straddling the heavy hand of the church and religion of the Middle Ages and the humanism and individualism of the future, both in his personal philosophy and in his historical context.

Milton was, in many ways, a humanist and believed in the value of human life as well as the rights and freedoms which are inherent in that life. However, Milton continually balanced this with the idea that true freedom can only be had if it is in line with the ordered, rational will of God.

Adam loves Eve and so, by joining her in eating the apple, sacrifices his own happiness for love. This, in itself is a good act, motivated by love. A true humanist would say that Adam acted freely and he has done a good thing. Milton, however, shows that even good acts are evil and corrupt if not done in line with God's will. Adam disobeys God and no matter what he does outside of obedience, it will be bad.

Despite his humanism, therefore, Milton believes that no acts can be considered good if they are against God's law. It is quite clear in this book that right after Adam took a bite of the apple, Adam and Eve had lustful, passionate sex. The physical descriptions of Adam and Eve have changed as well. They no longer glow with joy, they are less angelic in their nature, and, within hours of eating the apple, they are prone to new, irrational emotions ranging from anger to deep depression. As well, they see each other differently as well.

For Milton, the interior state of the soul is displayed visibly in the physical. Sin is always visible. In the prologue to Book IX, Milton says that his work must now take a tragic tone and that this Christian epic, though different, is nonetheless more heroic than earlier epics like the Iliad and the Aeneid. Again, he calls on Urania as the muse of Christian inspiration to help him complete his work and show the true heroism that lies in the Christian idea of sacrifice. Then Milton returns to his story.

God tells the angels that guarded the Garden of Eden that there was nothing they could do about stopping Satan and the mankind from making their decision. In a sense, he says, this was destined to happen. He then sends his Son to judge Adam and Eve. The Son calls to Adam and Eve, who are hiding in the bushes. They emerge, but instead of praising him, they cringe in guilt. Adam says that he heard the Son calling, but was ashamed that he was naked. Adam, amidst eating the fruit, but blames Eve, the partner that God had made for him. Eve admits as well, but blames the snake. The Son judges the snake: and makes him an animal who will grovel on his stomach and eat dust. The Son judges Eve. She will now have pain in childbirth and must be submissive to her husband. The Son judges Adam. He will have difficulty with the earth in getting food to grow. And death will be at the end for both of them. The Son then gives them both clothes made from animal skins.

Satan returns to hell and sends Sin and Death to reign on earth. His fallen angels gather around him in his temple to hear of his success. He tells them what he did. They do not cheer however, as he expected. Satan feels himself be turned into a giant snake, and he himself hisses with them. All of the fallen angels then turn into snakes, scorpions, and monsters. They gather around a tree of fruit, resembling the Tree of Knowledge. They taste the fruit, but it tastes like ashes. In the meantime, Sin and Death are on earth. Death starts to work on nature, starting with plants and moving up to animals. Sin, of course, concentrates on mankind.

God changes the laws of nature so that they will not always provide light and order. Most significantly, God sends the angels to tip the axis of the earth so that now it will have seasons. Now man will fight against nature instead of working with it. Adam laments the transformation. He repels Eve. Eve, despondent, contemplates suicide. Adam turns softer, and tells her that their condition and judgment could have been much worse. They are not, after all, dead and they are still together. The two then pray to God, ask for forgiveness, and begin to, once again, praise him.

The major theme of “Paradise Lost” is, of course, the idea of the Fall. The books opened immediately after the fall of Satan and close on the fall of mankind. Along the way, this fall theme appears again and again in smaller contexts, but always paralleling the idea of falling away from the goodness, the grace and light of God. The instances of the fall theme, therefore, parallel each other and we can ascertain their various meanings by comparing the reasons for the fall, the punishment for the turning away, and the reaction of the characters after the fall. Specifically, in Book X, one can now compare the way Adam and Eve deal with falling away from goodness to how Satan dealt with it.

By the end of the chapter, after the stinging immediacy of remorse and anger has quieted, the two decide that they will continue to do what they did before the fall: praise God. First, of course, they ask for forgiveness. Although what they have done changed their nature forever and they realize that they can never go back, still, they ask for God's forgiveness and ask to be brought back into goodness. Satan, too, immediately is stung with remorse and there are many instances, specifically in the Garden of Eden, when Satan truly misses his previous form and his previous life. Still, this remorse and regret only makes Satan more angry and more bitter and urges him on to corrupt with enthusiasm. Because of this, God's relationship with fallen mankind is much more different from God's relationship with Satan. God continually is open to man's return, though not without some punishment. In fact, God sacrifices his only Son to

finally redeem man. Man remains God's favorite creation, and man's destiny remains a union with God finally in heaven. Satan, on the other hand, is forever shunned from the light of heaven.

The first scene of Book X takes place in Heaven, where the angels are aware of Adam's and Eve's fall. God assembles the hosts to confirm this fact and to emphasize that he knew Adam and Eve would yield to temptation but that he in no way inclined them to the deed. The act was of their own free wills. Now, however, Adam and Eve must be judged; however, God adds, justice can be tempered with mercy. God sends the Son to pronounce sentence on Adam and Eve. The Son quickly descends to Eden where he pronounces judgment. God first condemns the serpent who allowed Satan to use his body. Further God establishes an eternal enmity between women and serpents. Eve's children will bruise the serpent's head; the serpent, their heel. Eve and all women will be given the pain of childbirth as well as subjugation to their husbands. Finally, men, because of Adam, will have to labor in the ground to make their food and be subject to death, literally returning to the dust from which they were created. As a final act, done so kindly that it presages God's ultimate mercy, the Son clothes Adam and Eve in animal skins. The scene now switches from Earth to Hell, where Sin and Death, having finished the causeway between Hell and Earth, start toward Earth. They see Satan in his angelic form, winging toward Hell. Satan reveals the events that have transpired, and Sin congratulates her father on his accomplishments and suggests, falsely, that his power has allowed her and Death to escape Hell. She adds, also that, Satan now controls all of humanity while God controls Heaven. Satan is pleased with Sin's comments and tells her to hurry to Earth with Death so that they can take control. He meanwhile proceeds on into Hell.

As Satan enters Hell, it appears deserted, and he has to go all the way into Pandemonium to find the other fallen angels. As the fallen angels see Satan, they welcome him joyously, and he addresses them with a gloating speech filled with pride. He tells them of the temptation of Eve and how he caused both humans to fall with a lowly apple. He says that the rebellious angels can now occupy Paradise. Expecting applause and plaudits of the assembled demons, Satan hears hissing instead. Snakes were crawling all through Pandemonium, and Satan and his followers were quickly turned into snakes. Trees like the Tree of Knowledge sprout up, but when the snakes eat the tempting fruit, it turns to bitter soot and ash. This scene essentially ends the role of Satan and the fallen angels in the narrative.

Meanwhile, Sin and Death have reached Earth where they see a fertile field for their exploits. God sees the children of Satan on Earth and tells the angels that, because of the fall of Adam and Eve, Sin and Death will continue to live on Earth until the Judgment Day, when they will be cast into Hell with their father and sealed up, never to exit. With this prophecy from God, Sin and Death are seen no more in the poem. The guardian angels return to heaven, sad for man's failure, and the Son of God descends to earth to judge the sinners. Mercifully, he delays their sentence of death many days, during which they may work to regain God's favor. Then, in pity, he clothes them both.

Satan meets Sin and Death on his return voyage to hell, and marvels at the great structure. Upon his arrival in Pandemonium, Satan boasts of his success to the assembly. Instead of applauding him, they can only hiss, for they and he have all been turned into snakes, their punishment from above. God instructs his angels what changed conditions must prevail in the world, now in fallen state, while on earth, Adam bemoans his miserable condition and the fate of the human race. He harshly rejects Eve's attempt to console him, but she persists and wins his forgiveness. She proposes they commit suicide, but Adam reminds her of God's promise that her seed should wreak vengeance upon the serpent. Moreover, they must seek to make peace with their offended Lord.

Man's transgression known, the guardian angels forsake Paradise and return up to heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved, God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be prevented by them. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors, who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity he clothes them both. Sin and Death sitting at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feel the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in hell, but to follow Satan, their Sire, up to the place of man. To make the way easier from hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then preparing for earth, they meet him, proud of his success returning to hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against man; instead of applause, is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise. Then, deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but

for the present commands his angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him; then to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, she proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent, and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended deity, by repentance and supplication.

In the next chapter, the Son hears the prayers for forgiveness from Adam and Eve and presents them to God, asking if the pleas for forgiveness aren't somehow sweeter now that mankind knows the difference between good and evil. God agrees and decides to lighten his judgment of the two. But, he says, mankind must be forbidden to live in Paradise. God calls a council to proclaim his decisions, and tells the archangel Michael to go down to Paradise with a squadron of Cherubim to evict Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve wake and Adam says that perhaps all is not lost. They then see Michael coming down from heaven and grow afraid. Michael approaches Adam and tells him that he and Eve must leave Eden. Adam laments their loss of Eden, but mostly because he will be far from God. Michael replies that God is everywhere, even outside of Eden. Michael then brings Adam to a hill to show him what will happen to him and his offspring up until the flood. He shows Adam how all his offspring is corrupted by Adam's sin and demonstrates by telling him about the story of Cain and Abel and the introduction of violence into mankind. Adam asks how man can avoid these horrible deaths. Michael replies "by temperance taught, " "the rule of not too much" and then man might die a peaceful death. Michael continues and narrates the stories of the sons of Cain, the prophet Enoch, and Noah and the Flood.

Many critics have argued that Milton implies that mankind was actually better off in the eyes of God and in the eyes of Adam and Eve . The opening of this chapter seems to enforce this view, as the prayers for forgiveness from Adam and Eve appear more sweet and valuable now that they can choose evil or good and now voluntarily choose good. There was only one thing they could do while they were in the pre-Fall garden and that was to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Other than that, nearly everything they did was ordered . Now, the universe has opened up, in a phrase, and they see that they can be controlled by animal instincts constantly if they so choose. But they choose to repent and continue to praise God .

According to these critics, then, the Fall was not only a necessary thing, but it was a good thing, a fortunate or happy fall, for both God and the humans. Loving and praising God now becomes a rarer, more appreciated act.

The idea of the "happy fall" is reinforced by the fact that the Son of God would never have come to earth in the form of Jesus Christ without the Fall. The phrase, "thy seed shall bruise our foe," is repeated again and again in the final books of *Paradise Lost*. The phrase, we see now, refers to the seed of Eve: who will be, down the line, the Son on earth, i.e. Jesus Christ: and how he will crush Satan and Death and Sin. The Fall of man makes his redemption through Christ possible.

The question that many critics and theologians ask is, "was mankind destined to fall?" For that matter, was Satan destined to fall? It is clear for Milton that God knew all along that man was going to fall, he told his Son long before it actually happened. Satan accuses God of creating him with a nature that was prone to pride, and, therefore, destined to fall. The idea of the "happy fall," perhaps, mitigates this accusation. God, indeed, predestined that Adam should fall so that he could show his love for mankind by sending his Son as sacrifice. Still, if Adam and Eve and Satan were all predestined to fall, are we, as well, destined to act by our natures in a way that God has already ordained?

As it is mentioned above, Milton began his poem by saying that he meant to justify the ways of God to man. We see now that Milton actually meant that he intended to give a justification for God's actions, not just provide a narration or explanation of them. Is God, as a character, justified in this creation story? Or is he the all-seeing tyrant that Satan accuses him of being? The question, in Milton's time, was personified in the battle between the Calvinists³³, and the Catholic Church³⁴. Milton, in his epic, seems to take a fragile middle road between the two. Adam and Eve offer fervent, sincere prayers to God for forgiveness in Book XI. In Heaven, God hears the prayers. The Son intercedes with the Father to show grace and mercy to the humans, saying that he will make up for any inadequacies in Man through his own incarnation and death. God accepts the Son's intercession but says that Adam and Eve cannot remain in Eden. They must still suffer the judgments God has proclaimed, and they must die. However, if they lead a good life, they will be able to live with God for eternity. God

³³ who believed in predestination

³⁴ who believed man's free will gave him a constant choice between good and evil

summons all the angels to hear his final pronouncement and assigns Michael to go to Earth and expel Adam and Eve from the Garden.

After their prayers, Adam and Eve are more reconciled with their new situation. Adam encourages Eve, reminding her that she will be the mother of Mankind and that her offspring will bruise the serpent. Eve answers that she does not feel worthy to be so honoured because she has brought Sin and Death into the world. Eve adds that she will be content to live out her allotted life in Eden. When Michael arrives at this point and informs Adam and Eve of God's decree that they must leave Eden, Eve is stunned, lamenting the loss of the flowers, her bridal bower, everything she holds dear. Adam is also shocked but understands that God's decree must be obeyed. He thanks Michael for informing them so gently. The angel then puts Eve into a peaceful sleep and takes Adam to the highest point in Paradise from which Michael gives Adam a vision of the future of Mankind.

Adam sees Cain's murder of Abel and then is told by Michael that the killer and victim are Adam's own sons. Adam laments the brutality of what he has seen and is then given a further vision of all the terrible ways in which death will take humans. Adam is in deep sorrow over what he has caused and asks if there is no other way for a man to die. Michael responds that those who live good and temperate lives may drop "like ripe fruit". Adam answers that he will neither seek death nor fear life but live in the best manner he can, an idea to which the angel assents. Next, Adam is shown a vision based on Genesis, an account of the children of Cain who discovered metalwork. The vision shows men on a plain working with metals and playing musical instruments. Then from the hills that border the plain come a group of Godly men. Beautiful women emerge from tents on the plain, and soon the men pair off and go with the women into the tents. Adam finds this scene much more pleasant than the first. Michael admonishes Adam not to be taken in by a life of pleasure. The people in the vision learned a useful skill but then allowed their craft to become an art, which was more important to them than God. They were the children of Cain. The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things; Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the angel denounces their departure; Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits; the angel leads him up a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood.

God sends Michael and his band to expel the sinning pair from Paradise, but first to reveal to Adam future events, resulting from his sin. The angel descends to Eden with the news of their expulsion, causing Eve to withdraw in tears. Michael leads Adam up a high hill, where he sets before him in visions what shall happen till the Great Flood. Michael continues to relate the story of man . He relates the story of the tyrant Nimrod and his desire to be greater than all men and even God by constructing the Tower of Babel. He tells the story of how God chose one nation, Israel, to be his chosen people and described the line from Abraham, to Joshua, through Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, who finally brought them into the promised land. He described the kingdom of David, the Temple of Solomon, and the Hebrew people's Babylonian exile and captivity.

Finally, Michael tells of the anointed Messiah who will finally conquer death and right . The Son ascends to heaven which will be possible for all men who follow God's law. Adam rejoices in the fact that the Son of God will be born of his seed, but how will the Son conquer Death? "Thy punishment he shall endure by coming in the flesh to a reproachful life and a cursed death," replies Michael. Michael finishes by telling Adam to add deed to the knowledge which he has been given, add virtue, patience, temperance and love. "Then wilt thou not be loath to leave this Paradise, but shall possess a paradise within thee, happier far."

³⁵Michael then holds both Adam's and Eve's hands and leads them out of Paradise.

At the same time, there are many positive stories and heroes in Raphael's narrative: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David and Joshua are all described as heroes who bring mankind back on track with God's will. The story culminates with Jesus Christ as the ultimate redemption. The story, therefore, also serves as comfort to Adam in order to show him that there will be members of his seed that will act honorable and bring the grace of God back onto mankind. Raphael's narrative ends with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Adam is filled with the ultimate satisfaction. Adam sees that the Fall was not necessary, but it exemplifies God's glory and goodness even more so than creation by coming to conclusion in the story of Christ. The power of God to redeem and forgive mankind through the resurrection of Christ, turning an "evil thing to good," is an even more powerful act than when God separated darkness from light. Raphael's narration, however, does more than just make Adam feel guilty about his decisions. It is actually a continuation of the basic theme that Milton established from the beginning, the theme of Fall and ascension, freedom and slavery, reason and animal

³⁵ "Paradise Lost", BookXII 645-610

appetites. The history of mankind is a series of falls from God's grace, a series of man acting irrationally and therefore creating corruption. Man turns away, as in the Tower of Babylon, and then returns in a continual cycle.

So it is with a bittersweet sense of loss mixed with glorious redemption that Adam and Eve, and the readers, leave the Garden. The final image of Adam and Eve walking hand in hand in search of a place in the post-Fall world is a reflection on the journey every man and woman must take in life. Milton balances the corruption of man with the hope of eternal life in grace to give us not a tragedy, but an epic reflection of the condition of humankind.

Book XII continues Michael's presentation of biblical history to Adam. He begins with the story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. Nimrod was known as a great hunter, and Michael adds that men "shall be his game" .By this the angel refers to Nimrod's rule over men that ultimately leads him to challenge God through the construction of the Tower of Babel. God stops this enterprise by changing the languages of those constructing the tower so that they cannot work together. Adam is upset that some men have dominion over others. Michael explains that because men cannot control their passions, other men take control of societies. God sends unjust rulers to control some groups so that they lose their personal freedom.

Michael goes on to explain that so many people in the world are wicked that God eventually decides to focus on the Israelites and their faithful leader, Abraham, who carries the seed that will ultimately produce the Savior. Here, Michael moves quickly through the stories of Jacob and Joseph followed by the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt to the rise of Moses as a leader of the great exodus from Egypt. Moses leads the people into the desert, receives the Commandments from God, and begins to establish laws for the people. Adam asks why men need so many laws, to which Michael responds that the need for laws shows the degeneration of people. The laws help men remember to do those things that they should know to do by themselves. Even so, Man cannot truly be saved until Jesus comes to sacrifice himself for all Mankind. Joshua eventually leads the Israelites to the Promised Land where they set up a society in which they are ruled by judges and kings. The greatest king is David whose lineage will carry the seed of the Savior. David's son, Solomon, will build the great temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. However, later kings will allow such a falling away from God that God will allow the entire nation to fall into captivity in Babylon. Factions in the society will fight among themselves for long periods of time until, under Roman rule, the Messiah will be born to a virgin.

When Adam expresses interest in the coming battle, Michael then explains that the Messiah's victory over Satan will not occur in a literal fight. Instead, the Son will become human in Jesus, will suffer for his beliefs, and will be executed. However, after three days, Jesus rises from the dead, thereby overcoming Death that Adam loosed upon the world. Jesus also sends out disciples to spread his message to the entire world. Those who obey God's commands will be saved and have eternal life. At the end of time, Jesus judges the living and the dead, and the truly faithful enters the most wonderful paradise of all. Michael continues in prophecy from the flood by degrees to explain who the Seed of woman shall be, the Savior which was promised, who shall redeem mankind. Adam is recomforted by these last revelations and resolves faithful obedience. He descends the hill with Michael and rejoins Eve, who is wakened from gentle sleep, reconfirmed in allegence to her husband. A flaming sword is placed to bar the gates behind them, as Adam and Eve are sent away from Paradise. The angel Michael continues from the flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the fall; his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place. They enter to the imperfect world, with all its perils, sufferings, troubles...

Conclusion

“Paradise Lost” is the greatest epic poem written in the English language by the great master of verse John Milton. “Paradise Lost” is an epic in every sense of the word : vast and ambitious in scope, powerful and moving in its language, and vivid in its depictions . As a work of fiction, it is superb. As a long poem, it is a monumental achievement , both intellectually as a work of the literary imagination and for the powerful expanses of its verse . Milton's life in many respects was always geared towards producing a great epic to rival that of Homer and Virgil and in “Paradise Lost” he achieved that aim, and to some critics he even surpassed it. “Paradise Lost” explosively investigates mankind's expulsion from the Garden of Eden at the hands of God. It was written, supposedly, to justify the ways of God to men ,however, it is certainly not as straightforward as that as some suggest that Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it. “Paradise Lost” seems to do much more than to explain the reasons why God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden. “Paradise Lost” in fact could be read, controversially, as a damning exploration of the cruelty of Christianity.

“Paradise Lost” is an epic poem based on the Biblical story of Adam and Eve. It attempts to justify and explain how we came to be what we are today. The central question to “Paradise Lost” is " where does evil comes from?" Throughout the poem we receive information about the origin of evil. At the beginning of John Milton's work we are given the Biblical explanation, of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge and are expelled from the Garden of Eden. This was man's first disobedience, which brought him mortality, and at the same time this first act gave source to evil. This was the effect of ambition. Adam and Eve both ate the apple from the tree in order to achieve a level of knowledge compatible to God's. According to “Paradise Lost”, Satan is also known to be the source of evil. Satan was sent to Hell as a cause of ambition. For the second time, ambition and the desire to become more powerful or knowledgeable, was the basis of evil. Satan challenged God, and was condemned to evil. Hell is clearly a state of mind.

“Paradise Lost is” one of the finest examples of the epic tradition in all of literature. In composing this extraordinary work, John Milton followed the manner of epic poets of past centuries. The poem's greatness is partly a function of its sheer sustained length, but also the visual immediacy with which Milton realizes the imagined scenes. Both Adam and Eve are archetypes with whom a reader can identify as humans , and the network of abstract influences surrounding their central transgression rarely threatens to obscure their essential

characteristics. As an embodiment of malicious cunning, Satan is a dramatic and almost recognizable character.

Milton has been criticized for glossing over certain contemporary developments in scientific and intellectual thought but the poem's realism is that of myth, and its credibility is dependent on the shapes of Christian belief rather than any specific historical details.

"Paradise Lost" reveals the difficulties and possibilities inherent in creating a position from which to utter forth a biblical lament. The narrator's visions issue from a multiple source, multiply gendered, which allows him great flexibility in his self-defense. Satan's character appears to be the central character within the story and is certainly painted as not wholly bad, if not good. Satan is a complex and interesting character, and it is at the start of the epic which we see Satan, the fallen angel, so descriptively suffering in the flames of hell, as cast down in punishment by the Almighty God. Despite of this we know the full extent of the deeds that Satan is about to undertake in his part of the corruption of Eve and the eating of the forbidden fruit.

Satan upon decides at the council in pandemonium that the way forward to punish God for his expulsion of heaven is to corrupt man, God's new creation. He sets forth to achieve his aim. It is to be man's fall that is to require the son of God to sacrifice his life for the future salvation of the human race. The all powerful and all seeing God can foresee the future and knows that Satan will corrupt.

In "Paradise Lost" the arguments at the head of each book were added in subsequent imprints of the first edition. In 1674, a fully "Revised and Augmented" edition was issued. Milton scholars generally used this edition as the standard for any new scholarly edition. The regularity with which Milton frequently conforms to principles of epic structure makes his occasional variations on the epic tradition more striking. On the whole, Milton has retained the formal devices of the heroic poem but invested them with Christian matter and meaning. Milton offers to the reader a number of the most controversial and interesting questions and situations in the poem. One of the most formidable problems that the reader must face is that of hero; exactly who is the epic hero in the poem? Adam--the central figure in the poem--is clearly the "epic person" or "primary hero".

Throughout the text of Milton's "Paradise Lost", we can see many instances of binary relationships connecting separate conceptual ideas.

The attention Milton gives to each character, and their specific personality, allows us to interpret their actions as consciously chosen deeds within the larger framework of the poem. Great detail is given to the idea of "creation". Beyond that of the creation of the world, there are many instances where the act of creation itself becomes an act of endowing power on some object or person. The most obvious example would be the creation of Adam and Eve by God. By creating the pair, God, desires them to glorify his ways through their praises and deeds. He gives them enough power over their destiny to choose to worship him as the Almighty. The fact that they have free will is important to God because they choose to give him praise despite any outside temptation. There is one obvious drawback to this kind of power. They chose to follow Satan's words. The fact that they had the free will to follow Satan's words meant that their decision was more important because it was arrived at through conscious thought. We can see this idea of power demonstrated throughout "Paradise Lost". The dual relationship between the beneficial act of bestowing power at the time of creation and the negative side of the free will to use that power freely, shows up within every character. Instances of creation appear in every book, and can be associated with every character. Some of the first appearances of the word "author" are connected with the idea of creation.

Milton repeats again and again, the idea that to create something is to legitimize it. The passages talking about both God and Satan give them a sense of power over the things they create. This power has an opposite side to it, however. Milton emphasizes through the actions of the principal characters that a higher type of power is endowed within a fashioned object, one which the creator has virtually no control over.

The Tree of Knowledge within the Garden must exist in order for the world of reality to have any legitimacy or worth. Meaning arises, for Milton, in the act of creating. Taking the role of the "author", Milton wields a kind of power over the creation of the poem. It becomes his choice, in the end, on what parts to create, and which to omit.

While grappling with great issues of spirituality, "Paradise Lost" is also remarkable for its entertainment value. Although written in the archaic language of its time, the scenes and action of the epic poem is exciting to the modern reader. Great clashes between the hosts of Heaven and Satan, compelling conversations between Adam and Eve, grotesque beasts of Hell, gripping arguments between angels and Satan, and astounding descriptions of the mythological zones of Heaven, Hell, and the Garden of Eden all combine to form an amazing fantasy that any lover of that genre can surely appreciate.

Modern criticism of "Paradise Lost" takes many different views of Milton's ideas in the poem. One problem is that "Paradise Lost" is almost militantly Christian in an age that now seeks out diverse viewpoints and admires the man who stands forth against the accepted view. Milton's religious views reflect the time in which he lived and the church to which he belonged. He was not always completely orthodox in his ideas, but he was devout. His purpose or theme in "Paradise Lost" is relatively easy to see, if not to accept.

In a certain sense, the reader of "Paradise Lost" may find himself or herself sympathizing with the Devil, pitying him, and even rooting for him. The reader is entrapped in a moral dilemma: How can one like the Devil? We want to believe in something so bad that even if the truth is right in front of us we ignore it in favour of the situation that better meets our personal beliefs. We cannot just simply see things for what they are. It is a common misconception that Milton's Satan in "Paradise Lost" is actually the hero.

Milton transforms God and the angels into palpable beings, humans with wings. Heaven is seen as a dictatorship with God at its head. God does not want to take away our freedom and ultimately he wants us to live in Paradise with him at his godhead.

*"Scepter and power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
Forever, and in me all whom thy lov'st:"*

Milton describes his God who wants to sit beside man in the new paradise not as his ruler but as his comrade. He would gladly give all of his power because he would no longer need it. Man would be him and he would be man. They would be one in the same.

He sees the tranquillity of it and it reminds him of the heaven that he gave up. He manipulates Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, therefore causing the fall of mankind. Satan has a great anger towards God. All of these attributes let us relate even more towards Satan. But what we have to realize is that God gave man the perfect garden, untouched by a non-existing evil. Satan appeared and took that away from man. He took something that was absolute and pure and turned it into a world of Sin and Death. According to Milton this will ultimately lead us to a greater Paradise however, when Satan caused the fall it can be sure that he didn't think that he was doing it for the eventual betterment of mankind. He could not see what he was ultimately doing and was just trying to cause trouble in Paradise.

“Paradise Lost” by Milton outlines the fall of mankind . Although “Paradise Lost” is a work filled with religious influence it does not stick to biblical truth .Adam is portrayed as somewhat weak individual who is uxorious. When Eve mentions working apart from each other instead of insisting they stay together he allows her to do as she wishes. Milton reveals his view that this is a mistake by Adam when he states that “hapless” Eve is walking into an ambush set by Satan.

The pride of Eve can first be seen when she is tempted by Satan. He also tells her that she will become like God. Eve’s lust of the fruit is apparent in the way she gazes upon it. This statement vividly and dramatically describes the lust that Eve held for the forbidden fruit. Adam’s lust and pride is at first not quite as visible as Eve’s. When Eve tries to persuade him to eat of the fruit he says the reason he partakes in it, is because he could not live without her if in fact eating it would bring death. However, he probably wanted to experience the same enlightenment that Eve said she was experiencing. Adam states, “My own in thee, for what thou art is mine.” Once they both eat the fruit all restraint is cast away. Adam wishes for ten more trees that he could eat his fill of the fruit. Although we do not know the true reasons that Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, this work demonstrates the destructiveness of man’s pride and lust.

“Paradise Lost” is a fictional work that portrays the carnal nature of man since the fall. By analyzing John Milton's “Paradise Lost”, it is plain to see it is a fine example of epic poetry. For the most part, John Milton follows the three main guidelines that construct an epic poem. By beginning in a formal way, having supernatural warfare, and engaging a character in a dark voyage. John Milton clearly uses classical epic characteristics in his poems.

Turning to the poetic elements once again, it is interesting to note Milton's repeated use of certain words. "Fruit," "fall," "forbidden" are, of course, used quite often and not always in the most obvious contexts. Interestingly, Milton avoids using the word "original," though theologians continually use the word to refer to the fall of Adam and Eve. They are extremes in Milton's mind, and the possibility of all-goodness or all-evil is wholly possible.

It is a fact that, people today still regard this poem as one of the great poetical texts of all time. Milton develops in Satan the first English language version of the anti-hero. Because he is the vile Fiend who opposes God. Milton created in “Paradise Lost” a portrayal of humanity's fall from bliss and expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

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